



Florida Traffic Incident Management Program Strategic Plan

February 2006



Florida Department of Transportation
Traffic Engineering and Operations Office
Incident Management and Commercial Vehicle Section
605 Suwannee Street, M.S. 90
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450
850.410.5600

Executive Summary

The Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Strategic Plan was developed to identify programs and actions to sustain the commitment to—and expand—the TIM Program in Florida to better meet our travel needs.

Traffic incidents are responsible for up to 60 percent of congestion delays that motorists encounter on the nation’s highways. Responders to these incidents—and other travelers—routinely face dangers from prolonged exposure to traffic and are too often victims of secondary crashes.

There are many reasons why multi-agency coordinated traffic incident management is important, but simply stated, clearing incidents faster saves lives, time, and money in all sectors of society. While managing traffic incidents is the primary focus of Florida’s TIM Program, the same coordination and communication lessons are essential to successfully managing large-scale emergencies such as wildfires, severe weather, or national security threats; and special events such as sporting, entertainment, political, tourist, and commercial activities.

The TIM Program has already deployed many major initiatives, including photogrammetry to map crash scenes, an 800 MHz Radio Project enabling communication between State Law Enforcement and TIM personnel, and a number of other TIM best practices. Other initiatives like

the use of personal digital assistants for incident logging and expedited clean-up of fuel spills should soon become a reality statewide.

Florida’s TIM success to date is the result of a multi-agency effort. Working with transportation and public safety agencies at all levels of government, and with other public and private-sector organizations, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and its partners have made excellent progress toward better management of traffic incidents. In late 2000, FDOT committed to formalize the TIM Program and the first organizational meeting was

held in Orlando in January 2001. FDOT further made a long-term commitment to sustaining the program. The TIM Strategic Plan identifies major programs and specific actions needed to ensure the ongoing success of the TIM Program in Florida.

MISSION: Provide efficient, coordinated, and consistent traffic incident management across the state that will improve the safety and reliability of the transportation network.

VISION: Develop an institutionally integrated, fully cooperative association of all public agency and private industry traffic incident management stakeholders to improve the safety and reliability of the Florida Transportation system and maintain Florida’s status as a national leader in TIM programs.

Importance of TIM

The primary goals of the TIM Program are to increase mobility and reduce secondary incidents. Traffic incidents have a significant impact on the state’s transportation system and lead to loss of life, injuries, and destruction of personal property and commercial goods resulting in costly delays, lost productivity, wasted fuel, and air pollution. Traffic incidents substantially reduce the mobility and security of the traveling public and commercial traffic.

Traffic incidents are responsible for approximately 50-60% of the congestion delays motorists encounter on the nation’s (and likely Florida’s) roadways every day.



Traffic incident management can be one of the most effective tools available to transportation managers for reducing urban congestion, with benefit/cost (B/C) ratios up to 10:1 nationally for freeway service patrols alone. Current projects nationally are estimated to save 170 million hours of delay at a cost savings to the public of \$3.031 billion, which is more than any other operational strategy considered. If good TIM practices were ubiquitous in the nation, the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) estimates a saving of 239 hours annually of unnecessary individual delay.

Summary Of Recommendations

The Florida Department of Transportation has reached a milestone where the Department can now invigorate its already successful TIM Program to reach new levels of leadership and vision. The program's future success will include understanding stakeholder needs, a statewide and national perspective on transportation management and operations, and the credibility to lead the TIM community to achieve new goals. The vision for FDOT's TIM Program is to, "Develop an institutionally integrated, fully cooperative association of all public agency and private industry traffic incident management stakeholders to improve the safety and reliability of the Florida transportation system and maintain Florida's status as a national leader in TIM programs."

Below are summaries of the recommendations presented in the TIM Strategic Plan.

Statewide TIM Program

The Statewide TIM program should pursue additional legislative and policy changes to limit the liability of traffic incident responders. Steps are being taken to enable all TIM personnel to participate in a common interagency communications system, but statewide deployment is needed. The TIM Steering Committee should be expanded to include more stakeholders, such as the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), Fire and Police Chiefs Associations, and public representation. The Statewide TIM Teams should be reorganized with agency-appointed representatives

and highly motivated chairpersons to energize the teams. Qualification/certification—and the necessary training—should be required for wrecker services and for Road Ranger operators. TIM performance measures are essential to gauging the success of the program and justifying institutional support.

The Statewide TIM Program should embrace a multi-agency, integrated TIM regimen with common practices that still recognize regional differences. The Road Ranger Program should transition from a motorist assist service to one of proactive incident management statewide. Program goals like the Open Roads Policy need to be thoroughly implemented at all levels of operations.

FDOT Central Office

An expanded TIM Program will require expanded staffing in FDOT's Central Office. A new position is needed for training, management and operations, quality assurance reviews, etc. A FDOT-FHP liaison position should also be created. The FHP officer should be assigned on a continuing basis to this position and he or she should reside in the Traffic Engineering and Operations Office in the FDOT Central Office in Tallahassee.

FDOT Districts

TIM practices should be harmonized in areas of maintenance, asset management, operations, etc. Gaps in TIM Team and Road Ranger coverage should be filled as soon as possible. FDOT and its partners should focus traffic incident management in the Transportation Management Centers (TMCs), which should be the centroid of all TIM activities regionally. TIM needs to be fully coordinated with state and county emergency management centers. Inter-agency operations and mutual support agreements are needed between transportation, public safety, and other agencies, such as medical examiners, hospitals, and hazardous materials handlers. Districts with TIM Teams and Road Rangers should require a full time TIM/Road Ranger Manager or two separate positions, depending on the program activity in the region.

Outreach

TIM should be interactive with other organizations that provide support services to the state’s safety program, such as Community Traffic Safety Teams, professional associations, auto clubs, and insurance companies. FDOT should develop a concerted TIM awareness program to educate the public about TIM legislation, such as the Move-It and Move-Over laws, as well as good TIM practices and the TIM Program in general.

TIM Program Budgeting

As outlined in the recommendations, an ever more aggressive effort is needed to ensure the safety and mobility of our traveling public, including the commercial carriers and tourists that are essential to our economic well being. Sustained and stable financial support is necessary. The table below summarizes the estimated program costs in the TIM Strategic Plan by implementation period (commencing from the publication of this plan).

The programs recommended in the TIM Strategic Plan range from no direct costs (e.g., policy changes) to substantial equipment costs (e.g., replacing Road Ranger vehicles—often no more than pick-ups—with fully equipped incident management units).

Bold actions by the Department of Transportation and its partners will ensure the safest possible travel environment for Florida’s citizens, our visitors, and our commercial carriers, thus enhancing the economic welfare and well being of our state.

Where to Find More

For more information on the TIM Program in Florida, you can review copies of the *TIM Strategic Plan*, a *TIM Strategic Plan Overview* that lists the recommendations in more detail than this Executive Summary, and the *TIM Reference Document*, which provides a much more detailed background on the program. These are available on the FDOT’s TIM Web site shown below.

Think Safe—Be Safe!

Term	Time	Initial Cost	Annual Operation
Overall Program Cost Estimates			
Short	Up to 1 year	\$ 2,282,500	\$ 550,500
Medium	1-2 years	\$ 3,007,500	\$ 1,154,000
Long	Over 2 years	\$ 11,525,000	\$ 10,595,000
Total		\$ 16,815,000	\$ 12,299,500
Selected Key Actions*			
Customize data logging/communications system		\$ 750,000	\$ 75,000
Common inter-agency communications system		\$ 1,250,000	\$ 250,000
Wrecker operators training/qualification program		\$ 150,000	
Road Ranger training/qualification program		\$ 1,920,000	\$ 453,600
New interagency joint operations agreements		\$ 150,000	N/A
Heavy wrecker incentive program statewide		\$ 150,000	\$ 500,000
Regional TIM Team support all districts (some costs offset by current contracts)		\$ 1,400,000	\$ 1,470,000
Florida Central Office TIM support		\$ 400,000	\$ 440,000
Convert Road Ranger equipment from motorist assist to TIM		\$ 10,125,000	\$ 2,025,000
Upgrade Road Ranger operators from motorist assist to TIM (some cost offset by current operations)		Included in training	\$ 6,750,000

*This is not the complete list—just the most significant actions.

For more information: http://www.dot.state.fl.us/trafficoperations/incidentmanagement/incident_main.htm