

## TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN FLORIDA

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In the early 1970's, the need for a multi-disciplinary team approach was recognized by the Florida Department of Transportation in the development of a freeway surveillance and control project on the I-275 corridor encompassing the 3-mile Howard Frankland Bridge across Tampa Bay. This need led to the establishment of the State's first traffic management team, which played a vital role in the design and continuing updates to this project installed in the late 1970's. The successes that were achieved through the use of this team led to the establishment and continuing involvement of traffic management teams in all major urban areas in Florida. The purpose of this paper is to present the purpose and objectives, organization, and functions of these teams in Florida.

Presently there are five active freeway management teams in Florida. The original team in the Tampa Bay area has been expanded to address more than its initial segment of I-275 and now concerns itself with all freeways in the Hillsborough and Pinellas County area surrounding Tampa Bay. Teams were established in the Jacksonville and Orlando areas in 1986. In 1987 Dade County and Broward County teams became fully functional. Each of these teams meet on a regular monthly schedule and address items of interest to all participants in the team. The primary purpose and objective of these monthly meetings are as follows:

- ° Increase awareness and personal relationships among all parties involved in responses to freeway incidents.
- ° Advise other participants on the concerns and interests from their area of expertise and prospective.
- ° Coordinate their activities with those of other areas of expertise to provide the most effective and efficient approach to servicing freeway incidents.
- ° Assist in the development in the overall plan for coordination of team activities and response to incidents.
- ° Assist and support other team members in obtaining support and resources required for their area of expertise in the overall coordinated effort.
- ° Critique past efforts of the team in responding to major freeway incidents and development modifications and revisions to the overall coordinated effort.
- ° Review and advise the Department of Transportation on the maintenance of traffic plans associated with major freeway reconstruction activities.

To accomplish these objectives, Florida's Traffic Management Teams have evolved from teams composed of limited areas of expertise to ones with diversity and a wide variety of expertise. Some of Florida's teams have as many as thirty participants. The majority of these participants, however, do not attend monthly meetings on a regular basis but respond when required to the team's needs in specific areas. The nucleus of these traffic management teams

consists of the following:

- Traffic Engineering at the City, County and State levels
- Police enforcement at the City, County and State levels
- Highway maintenance at the State level
- Emergency medical and Fire rescue.
- News Media.
- Special interests groups such as American Automobile Association.

Other supporting participants in Florida's Traffic Management Teams are as follows:

- Environmental protection agencies
- Local Emergency Preparedness organizations
- Wrecker services
- FDOT Weight Enforcement
- Local Military groups
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

Traffic Management Teams in Florida have been meeting regularly and have had many team successes in implementing recommendations and changes to the way freeway incidents are responded to in their area. These successes have succeeded in building the "esprit de corps" required for continued enthusiasm and aggressive activities by these teams. Below is a listing of Early Team Products from Traffic Management Teams in Florida. Some of these products currently exist only in one location, but through the sharing of efforts by all teams, each takes advantage of the successes of others and blends these successes into products for its own team. This sharing and communication among the teams in Florida is a vital element in the continuing promotion and success of this effort.

Two of the current teams in Florida are expected to split into four teams covering more specific areas of Florida's interstates. At least one more team is anticipated in the near future for the Palm Beach area. These new teams will increase the total number of Traffic Management teams in Florida to eight by the end of 1988. Continued successes by these teams and persistence by the members in selling, to management and the public, this approach to congestion relief on Florida's freeways will ensure the continuation and growth of this activity in Florida.

**EARLY TEAM "PRODUCTS"**

1. Alternate route maps (first generation)
2. Modification of pickup truck with hinged sign frame for incident management
3. Two service patrol wreckers now in operation weekdays (six hours) on bridge. FDOT equipment and drivers are being used but will be replaced by contract services.
4. Two additional service patrol vehicles (non-wreckers) to begin service soon on another bridge.
5. Emergency locator markers will be installed on a test section of I-95 in Miami for purposes of more accurate reporting of incident sites by one on-site agency to another responding agency. These will be small signs on existing sign and lighting poles. Also to be tried will be painted info (route number, roadway direction, and milepost to one tenth) on median barrier.
6. Plans being formulated to get "fire-fighting" water to top of multi-level interchange: possible pipe only, through which water will be pumped during times of need only.
7. Provisions being made in noise barrier walls for running fire hose from neighborhood fire plugs to an incident site on the freeway (fire fighting, flushing, and washing).
8. Special signs or markers along the edgeline and/or freeway fence showing closest neighborhood fire plug.
9. Assisted (by letter of endorsement) local sheriff's securing budget for additional helicopter aircraft.
10. Preliminary locations for off-freeway accident investigation sites.
11. Median signs installed to strengthen motorists' knowledge of state statutes, "Accident Vehicles Must be Moved from Traffic Lanes".
12. Improved statewide standard sign being developed (by Orlando Team) concerning item 11, "Move Accident Vehicles from Travel Lanes".
13. An "olympian" sized planned event in Miami was successfully orchestrated by numerous federal, state, local and Vatican agencies who developed a plan for a two-day visit by Pope John Paul and President Reagan in September,

1987. The team chairman played a major role via a special traffic management plan.

14. Special traffic redirection provisions by special U-turns beneath the I-275, Howard Frankland Bridge, were developed by the team for times of total or one-direction bridge closure during hours of major incidents. Since the 8 to 9 foot clearance will only clear an estimated 85 to 90 of the vehicles, we will install "overheight" detector to separate the "goes" from the "no-goes"!
15. Agenda included an F.C.C. engineer to explain more about emergency communications -- an acknowledged weak link in freeway management at the FDOT, FHP, and local agencies, both from inadequate, antiquated equipment and need for special equipment (and possible frequencies) for direct inter-agency communication during a major incident.
16. Interest developed for both portable, changeable message (matrix) signs for mainline communication with drivers about incidents ahead and for diversion route signs (usually, roll-up, reflective, with velcro message changeability). One FDOT District (Tampa) is ready to requisition the later.