

Quicker Response on Motorist Aid

By Chuck McGinness | Wednesday, May 23, 2007, 10:12 AM

You're driving down I-95 near Fort Lauderdale when your car breaks down.

Naturally, the first thing you do is call *FHP for help.

In the past, the calls were answered at the Florida Highway Patrol's Lake Worth communications center. Because of the huge volume of calls coming into the center, it could take a few moments for one of the call takers to pick up.

The call taker then had to transfer the call to the state's SMART SunGuide Transportation Management Center to send a Road Ranger to assist the stranded motorist.

A new procedure is in place to speed up the process.

Now, calls for roadside assistance are routed directly to the TMC, allowing the FHP more time to answer emergency calls.

Once the transfer program goes through a trial period, it will be expanded to Palm Beach County highways.

Free roadside assistance is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Road rangers will change flats, provide gas and water and jump-start batteries.

When they get a call for help, TMC operators can use the closed-circuit television cameras along I-95, I-75 and I-595 to verify the location of the motorist.

FHP is still able to monitor the calls through a live remote connection to the TMC database and camera network.

And drivers should always remember to call 911 in emergencies.

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