

Palm Beach County Freeway Incident Management Team

June 3, 2003
Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES:

Atkins, Mike / FDOT WPB	Maloney, David / FDOT
Bauer, Lawrence / FDOT Maint.	McClane, Ed / PBC Traffic
Brochard, Gordon J / Sister's Towing	McGinness, Chuck / Palm Beach Post
Burrie, Scott / FDOT WPB	McKissack, Ed / PB Farradyne
Castro, Javier / G&O	McTague, Dee / Turnpike ITS
Churchill, John / PBSO	Moore, David / Florida's Turnpike
Driscoll, Thomas / FDOT Dist Maint	Peacock, Sarah / DFA
Echevarria, Even / Florida's Turnpike	Pelton, Bradford / FHP Troop K
Egeli, I A / FHP	Quinn, Dan / G&O
Frith, David / FHP Troop K	Ramil, Luis / FHP Lantana
Gallo, Bob / PBC Health	Scarpellino, John / PB Farradyne
Gass, Richard / Palm Beach Co Rescue	Saridakis, THI Jak / West Palm Beach PD
Gold, Allan / Road Ranger / Lyons	Smith, Ted / PB Farradyne
Healey, Leeanne / Road Ranger / Lyons	Sparks, John / PB Farradyne
Kinchen, Vana / FDOT Ft. Pierce	Tomaszewski, John / Delray Beach FD
Landgraf, Greg / TBE Group	Vore, Richard / FHP Lantana
Levinson, Fred / SmartRoute Systems	Wagner, Ken / PB Sheriff's Office
Main, Jeff / Palm Beach Garden PD	Zuccala, Drew / Zuccala's Wrecker Service

Call to Order: The bi-monthly FIM Team meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 3, 2003, at the Palm Beach County Emergency Operations Center. Ted Smith and John Sparks of PB Farradyne facilitated the meeting.

Introductions: Team members introduced themselves and the agencies they represent.

Discussions:

I. Palm Beach County Interim Traffic Management System (ITMS) Implementation

John Sparks provided an update on the ITMS project progress. ITMS is a traffic and incident management system being deployed and operated during the Palm Beach County I-95 reconstruction.

ITMS field devices include 30 SmartZone units (with CCTV, microwave speed detection, and Dynamic Message Signs) on I-95, and 38 trailer-mounted Dynamic Message Signs on surrounding arterials.

The new Traffic Management Office, located at 2200 Centrepark Drive West, West Palm Beach, is open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays, with the intent of going to a 24/7 operation in the future. The TMO coordinates the activities of the Road Ranger Service Patrol on I-95 in Palm Beach County, and serves as a communications hub for I-95 incidents. Real-time information is exchanged with 511, Metro Networks, FDOT, FHP, Florida's Turnpike, the Palm Beach EOC, Palm Beach County, PBI Airport, local police, fire, and other agencies.

In addition, the TMO provides information directly to motorist through the Dynamic Message

Signs on I-95 and nearby arterial roadways, and to potential motorists through the project Web site. Camera images, a congestion map, and other information will be available on the project Web site in early July. Web site address: www.palmbeachcotraffic.org

Some notification and communication procedures have already been established. The TMO will continue to contact other agencies to establish the procedures for each agency.

II. Use of I-95 Dynamic Message Signs for HOV Lane Information

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At a recent FHP / FDOT meeting, questions were raised about the potential lifting of HOV restrictions during incidents, and using the DMS on I-95 to inform motorists of this.

While it was determined that HOV restriction times should not be displayed on Dynamic Message Signs, the signs could be used to encourage drivers to get back over into the general purpose lanes after passing an incident.

The permanent FDOT signs in Broward are normally blank, and only activated when there is an incident. The potential for secondary collisions from motorist inattention to the driving task while reading DMS signs reinforces the concept of only using the DMS signs when an important message must be delivered to motorists.

A summary of HOV DMS practices nationally during incidents, compiled by PBF, was distributed.

III. Distribution and discussion of the “Guidelines for the Mitigation of Accidental Discharges of Motor Vehicle Fluids (Non-Cargo)”

The guidelines were developed by the statewide Traffic Incident Management Teams with input from multiple agencies. They address vehicle fluids, not Hazardous Materials releases or cargo spills, and were prepared to outline steps that can be taken by early responders to motor vehicle crashes to reduce the confusion and subsequent delays when spilled vehicle fluids are involved. They include a one-page Quick Action Guide that can be distributed separately for easy reference. The Guidelines are now in Final Draft form and will likely become FDOT Operational Procedures.

While there are no quantity restrictions for the spill mitigation, the 25-gallon reporting threshold remains.

Florida’s Turnpike has already adopted a nearly identical version, and also developed a decision flowchart to provide further guidance.

IV. Alligator Alley Highway Advisory Radio

The FIM team has previously discussed the need for regional coordination, especially with incidents on Alligator Alley. The installation of a low-power FM radio service on the west end of the Alley will help fill this need. The broadcast will normally provide information about the Everglades’ plants and animals, the threats to them, and the program to restore the Everglades. But the broadcasts will also have an emergency management purpose, providing weather bulletins, incident information including accidents and fires, hurricane updates and evacuation information, and missing-child alerts. FIM representatives are working with the radio team to insure that timely incident information can be incorporated in the broadcast plan.

V. US DOT 2002 Highway Fatalities Report

The US DOT has released their annual report on fatalities in 2002. Some points from that report:

- The fatality rate remained unchanged at 1.51 fatalities for 100 million vehicle miles traveled.
- Estimated fatalities were up from 42,116 in 2001 to 42,850 in 2003.
- 53% of the increase in traffic deaths resulted from rollover crashes involving SUV's and pickup trucks.
- Deaths of children seven and under dropped to historic low levels. Pedestrian deaths also declined.
- 59% of those killed were not wearing safety belts.

VI. Review and Discussion of Recent Major Incidents

Timelines of each incident were distributed to the meeting attendees to provide points of discussion. Comments on the incidents:

- Thursday, April 24, 2003, 1:10 a.m., I-95 sb north of 6th Ave South – Jeep and pickup vs. arrowboard
 - Arrowboard was struck and ended up in travel lane. Road Ranger on scene waited for tow company arrival to remove arrowboard.
- Monday, May 5, 2003, 4:17 a.m., I-95 nb south of SR 708, Martin County – Motorcycle vs. cow
 - This incident involved vandalism that allowed cattle to roam onto I-95. The motorcyclist was struck by a car after he had hit a cow.
- Sunday, May 11, 2003, 9:20 a.m., I-95 nb north of Commercial Blvd., Broward County – Tow truck operator fatality
 - This incident occurred as the tow operator was just finishing loading a disabled vehicle. He was struck by a vehicle that drifted onto the shoulder. OSHA contacted PB Farradyne to find out more about the incident response structure. OSHA would like to develop training and operational criteria for roadways to include personal safety and traffic control devices.

VII. Construction Projects Update

I-95

- I-95/PBIA Connector
 - The southbound ramp to Southern Blvd will remain closed through July 9.
 - The new Belvedere ramps and northbound Southern ramp scheduled to open soon. The new northbound Belvedere off ramps will be located south of the current location.
- I-95 HOV Expansion, North of Atlantic Ave. to North of Gateway Blvd.
 - Traffic has been shifted to the inside lanes.
 - Two lanes of I-95 southbound will be closed from 9 pm to 6 am through June 6.
- I-95 HOV Expansion, Linton Blvd. to North of Atlantic Ave.
 - Work is being coordinated with the Tri-Rail double-tracking.
 - The ramp from I-95 Southbound to eastbound Linton will be open June 4.

- The ramp from I-95 Northbound to eastbound Linton remains open.
- The on-ramp from Linton to I-95 Northbound remains closed. Re-opening has been delayed three months.
- The ramp from westbound Atlantic to I-95 southbound remains closed. The ramp should re-open after August.
- I-95 HOV Expansion, North of Blue Heron Blvd. to South of PGA Blvd.
 - Traffic switch is scheduled for late August or early September.
 - No I-95 lane closures scheduled.
- I-95 HOV Expansion, Gateway Blvd. to 6th Ave. South
 - Traffic shift was completed ahead of schedule
 - Two lanes of I-95 Northbound, and the northbound on-ramp from Lantana will be closed from 8 pm – 6 am through June 6.
- I-95, PGA Blvd. to Martin County Line
 - No I-95 lane closures scheduled.

Turnpike

- Palm Beach Resurfacing
 - Periodic lane closures and lane shifts Sunday through Thursday from 8 pm to 5 am near the PGA Boulevard interchange.
- Loxahatchee and Cypress Creek Bridge Deck Replacement
 - Single-lane closures midnight through noon through June 6.
- Boca Sound Wall project (Mile 76-77 north of Glades Road)
 - No lane closures scheduled

VIII. Other Team Issues

- FHP's new SmartCop computer aided dispatch (CAD) is operational, but experiencing growing pains. It is at about 50% capacity right now, and has some bugs, such as incorrect wrecker zones.
- The Turnpike TMC is providing a staff person at the FHP Lake Worth Regional Communications Center from 6 am to 10 am and 4 pm to 8 pm, three days a week. Plans are to increase this to a full-time shift. Co-located staff is improving the communication between FHP and the TMC.
- Turnpike Incident Management initiatives are ongoing, with the approved vehicle-fluid spill policy and Road Ranger coordination and training. Plans to implement a Recovery Wrecker Class are proceeding, as are plans for additional team building and training.
- 511 had their second highest call volume in May, and Web hits continue to rise. The 511 center is always looking for more timely and accurate traffic information, and wants to work with all agencies to exchange that data.

- The new Move Over law does not apply to Towing and Recovery vehicles. Ted Smith advised that the legislation / regulation varies by state. A new federal standard or model is being developed, however.

Next Palm Beach County FIM Team Meeting: Tuesday August 5, 2003 at *FDOT West Palm Beach Maintenance*.

Meeting Notes were taken by: Ed McKissack and John Sparks, PB Farradyne, (954) 714-8081