

BEST PRACTICES FOR TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT IN FLORIDA

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Incident management is defined as the planned, systematic, and coordinated use of human, mechanical, institutional, and technical resources to reduce the duration and impact of incidents, and to improve the safety of crash victims, incident responders, and motorists. If this process is not pre-planned and well-coordinated, a bad situation can become much worse because of the number and variety of participants typically involved (e.g, transportation agencies, law enforcement, service patrols/towing, fire and rescue/EMS, HAZMAT, media/information service providers). Interagency cooperation is a significant issue in the incident management process because interagency agreements usually are not formalized to clearly define roles and responsibilities.

OBJECTIVES

The basic objectives of this research effort are to consolidate pertinent information on traffic incident management programs, procedures, and techniques throughout the country and within the state of Florida, to summarize lessons learned and best practices in integrated freeway and arterial incident management, to identify suitable performance measures for incident management programs, and to recommend overall program improvements for application in Florida.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The report documents the best practices currently being used in incident management. Among these practices are the following:

- Road Ranger service patrols
- Co-location of agencies in traffic management centers
- Statewide and regional traffic incident management teams
- Written “Open Roads Policy” with a stated time goal
- Roadway Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) program
- Traffic Management Vehicle (TMV)
- Severe Incident Response Vehicle (SIRV)
- Interim Traffic Management System (ITMS)
- 5-1-1 Motorist information systems
- Photogrammetry for incident investigation

The report identifies both short-term and long-term performance measures that should be tracked and evaluated. Each of the measures that have been identified is specifically defined so that there may be a uniform definition for each of these terms. The identified short- and long-term measures are as follows:

Short-term measures

- Clearance time
- Response times of the various responders
- Site clearance time
- Incident duration

Long-term measures

- Recovery time
- Incident influence time
- Incident-related delay
- Lane-miles of backup
- Secondary crash rates

Specific recommendations identified in the report also included the establishment of a direct link into the Florida Highway Patrol's Computer Aided Dispatch system. This would provide a rich source of pertinent traffic incident data that would assist in performance measurement of major incidents. The Department should also continue to hold statewide and regional incident management team meetings. It is recommended that the Department work to centralize the Road Ranger contracts to provide for greater uniformity throughout the state.

BENEFITS

This project has defined and identified specific performance measures that can be used to track progress in improving incident management. Thus, the results of this project, if implemented, will both facilitate the improvement process and, in turn, help to reduce traffic congestion by reducing the duration of traffic incidents. Reduced congestion translates to improved mobility, and, therefore, cost and time savings.

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