

“FIRST COAST LOCAL OPEN ROADS POLICY”

Quick Clearance for Safety and Mobility

This agreement by and between the **Florida Highway Patrol (FHP)**, the **Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)**, **County or Local Law Enforcement** and **County or Local Fire Rescue**, establishes a policy to expedite the removal of vehicles, cargo, and debris from roadways on the State Highway System to restore, in an URGENT MANNER the safe and orderly flow of traffic following a motor vehicle crash or incident on Florida’s roadways.

Whereas: Public safety and the safety of responding personnel, is the highest priority and must be maintained especially when injuries or hazardous materials are involved. The quality of life in the State of Florida is heavily dependent upon the free movement of people, vehicles, and commerce. The FHP, FDOT, city and county officials of Law Enforcement and Fire Rescue share the responsibility for achieving and maintaining the degree of order necessary to make this free movement possible. Agencies have the responsibility to do whatever is reasonable to reduce the risk to responders, secondary crashes, and delays associated with incidents, crashes, roadway maintenance, construction, and enforcement activities.

The following operating standards are based on the philosophy that the:
State Highway System will not be closed or restricted any longer than is absolutely necessary.

Be it resolved: Roadways will be cleared of damaged vehicles, spilled cargo, and debris as soon as it is safe to do so. It is understood that damage to vehicles or cargo may occur as a result of clearing the roadway on an urgent basis. While reasonable attempts to avoid such damage shall be taken, the highest priority is restoring traffic to normal conditions. Incident caused congestion has an enormous cost to society. This cost is significantly greater than the salvage value of an already damaged vehicle and its cargo.

Florida Highway Patrol Responsibilities

Members of the FHP who respond to the scene of traffic incidents will make clearing the travel portion of the roadway a high priority. When an investigation is required, it will be conducted in as expedient a manner as possible considering the severity of the collision. Non-critical portions of the investigation may be delayed until lighter traffic conditions allow completion of those tasks. The FHP will only close those lanes absolutely necessary to conduct the investigation safely. FHP will coordinate with FDOT or their Asset Management Agent (FDOT/Agent) representatives to set up appropriate traffic control, establish alternate routes, expedite the safe movement of traffic trapped at the scene, and restore the roadway to normal as soon as possible.

Whenever practical, crashes on access controlled roadways will be removed to off ramps, accident investigation sites or other safe areas for completion of investigations to reduce unnecessary delay. Tow trucks will be requested as soon as it is evident that they will be needed to clear the roadway.

The FHP will not unnecessarily cause the delay in reopening all or part of a roadway to allow a company to dispatch their own equipment to off-load cargo or recover a vehicle or load that is impacting traffic during peak traffic hours or creating a hazard to the public. The FHP and FDOT/Agent will cooperate in planning and implementing clearance operations in the most safe and expeditious manner.

Florida Department of Transportations Responsibilities

When requested by the FHP or other emergency agency, FDOT/Agent will respond and deploy resources to major traffic incidents 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Each FDOT District will develop and implement response procedures to meet the goal of providing initial traffic control within **30 minutes** of notification during normal working hours and **60 minutes** after hours and on weekends.

The FDOT/Agent, in coordination with the FHP, will upgrade traffic controls, determine detour routes, and discuss clearance strategies. When requested FDOT/Agent will provide temporary traffic controls to ensure a safe work zone for all responders and the motoring public.

The FDOT/Agent in cooperation with the FHP will determine and deploy the necessary heavy equipment and manpower to reopen the roadway if clearance of the travel lanes are being delayed or is determined that the task is beyond the capabilities of the wrecker service on scene. If cargo or spilled loads [non-hazardous] are involved, FDOT/Agent will make every effort to assist in the relocation of the materials in the shortest possible time, using whatever equipment necessary. All such materials or any vehicles relocated by FDOT/Agent will be moved as short a distance as possible to eliminate the traffic hazard.

FDOT/Agent personnel will document all hours and equipment used for traffic control; roadway clearance and debris clean up. FDOT/Agent will place traffic control devices at the scene should any damaged vehicles or cargo remain adjacent to the travel lanes on the shoulder for removal at a later time.

The FHP and FDOT/Agent will continually work together to ensure that the needs of motorists on our highways are being met in the most professional, safe and efficient manner.

County and Local Law Enforcement Department's Responsibilities

Members of County or Local Law Enforcement who respond to the scene of traffic incidents when applicable will make clearing the travel portion of the roadway a high priority. When an investigation is required, it will be conducted in as expedient a manner as possible considering the severity of the collision. Non-critical portions of the investigation may be delayed until lighter traffic conditions allow completion of those tasks. The County or Local Law Enforcement will close only those lanes absolutely necessary to safely conduct the investigation. The County or Local Law Enforcement will coordinate with FDOT/Agent representatives to set up appropriate traffic control, establish alternate routes, expedite the safe movement of traffic trapped at the scene, and restore the roadway to normal conditions as soon as possible.

Whenever applicable, damaged vehicles on access controlled roadways will be removed to off ramps, accident investigation sites, or other safe areas for completion of investigations to reduce unnecessary delay. Tow trucks will be requested as soon as it is evident that they will be needed to clear the roadway.

The County or Local Law Enforcement will not unnecessarily cause any delay in reopening all or part of a roadway to allow a company to dispatch its own equipment to off-load cargo or recover a vehicle or load that is impacting traffic during peak traffic hours or creating a hazard to the public. The County or Local Law Enforcement and FDOT/Agent will cooperate in planning and implementing clearance operations in the most safe and expeditious manner.

County or Local Fire Department or Fire-Rescue District Responsibilities

Members of County or Local Fire Departments who respond to the scene of traffic incidents will make clearing the travel portion of the roadway a high priority. When working an incident (where there is no injuries or hazardous materials) operations will be conducted in as expedient a manner as possible considering the severity of the collision. The County or Local Fire Departments will close only those lanes absolutely necessary to safely conduct the fire/rescue operations. The County or Local Fire Departments will coordinate with law enforcement and FDOT/Agent representatives to set up appropriate traffic control, establish alternate routes, expedite the safe movement of traffic trapped at the scene, and restore the roadway to normal conditions as soon as possible. As soon as FDOT/Agent has set up appropriate traffic control for the safety of the responders and travelers, County or Local Fire Departments will move or reposition vehicles that were initially positioned solely to shield responders. Fire Department vehicles will be moved to appropriate areas minimizing the blockage of traffic.

Therefore, it is agreed as follows:

The FHP, FDOT, city and county Law Enforcement and Fire Rescue, will evaluate and continually update and modify their operating policies, procedures, rules, and standards to assure they are consistent with this **“OPEN ROADS POLICY”** agreement.

FHP and County and Local Law Enforcement will prioritize the investigative tasks and reopen travel lanes upon completion of tasks that must be conducted, without the impediment of traffic flowing.

Roadways will be cleared as soon as possible. It is the goal of all agencies that **all incidents be cleared from the roadway within 90 minutes of the arrival of the first responding officer.** This goal being made with the understanding that more complex scenarios may require additional time for complete clearance.

It is further agreed that:

The FHP, FDOT, city and county officials of Law Enforcement and Fire Rescue, will actively solicit and enlist other state, county, and local agencies, political subdivisions, industry groups, and professional associations to endorse and become party to this **“OPEN ROADS PHILOSOPHY”** for the State of Florida.

Agreement Execution: Use of Counterpart Signature Pages

This Agreement, and any amendments hereto may be simultaneously executed in multiple counterparts, each of which so executed shall be deemed to be an original, and such counterparts together shall constitute one and the same instrument. Notwithstanding any other provision herein to the contrary, this Agreement shall constitute an agreement amongst the parties that have executed a counterpart and parties listed but not executing shall not be deemed to be parties to the Agreement.

In witness whereof, each party hereto has caused this document to be executed in its name and on its behalf by its duly authorized Chief Executive.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL

By: _____
Charlie W. Baldwin, P.E.
District Secretary
District 2

By: _____
Major Grady Carrick
Troop Commander – Troop G

Date: _____

Date: _____