

**INLAND DIVISION  
FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL**

**STANDARD OPERATING  
PROCEDURES**

**January 2008**

**ISSUED BY:**

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FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL  
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# **Chapter 1**

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **1.A WHY A FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL?**

On June 28, 1993, Riverside County implemented their Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) program. On January 3, 2006, San Bernardino County implemented a Freeway Service Program as well. FSP has been expanded several times due to the public's overwhelming positive feedback and the continuing success of reducing freeway congestion.

Our local freeway system is the vital artery that carries countless commuters to and from work and facilitates the transportation of interstate commerce to businesses. Studies that focus on commute traffic patterns as they relate to different incidents found that when one lane of a three lane freeway is closed, capacity is reduced by about 60% as vehicles are forced to funnel down to safely negotiate the incident. When two lanes out of three are closed traffic efficiency is reduced by about 90%. Even an individual changing a tire on a shoulder can reduce capacity by 15% as other motorists slow down to look. Therefore, the key to maintaining maximum capacity is getting closed lanes open and vehicles off the freeway as quickly and safely as possible.

These studies indicate that increasing the number of freeway lanes is an expensive solution for increasing the number of vehicles a highway can accommodate. Managing the existing system is an inexpensive strategy in comparison. This is where the Freeway Service Patrol Program comes in to play.

By performing the various services, disabled motorists are assisted in removing their vehicles before their presence has an adverse impact on traffic. The end results are significant. Not only is traffic congestion reduced but the following benefits are realized:

- Disabled motorists are provided an extra margin of safety.
- There are fewer secondary traffic collisions (hence fewer injuries and deaths).
- People are less stressed as they spend less time on the freeway getting to and from work.
- Air quality improves as vehicles spend less time on freeways.

### **1.B LEGISLATIVE INTENT**

The Legislature of California has found and declared that the emergency roadside assistance provided by highway service organizations is a valuable service, which benefits millions of California motorists. Emergency roadside assistance is provided statewide in cooperation with public agencies.

The Department of the California Highway Patrol, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, is responsible for the rapid removal of traffic impediments on highways within the State. The Department of the California Highway Patrol may enter into agreements with regional or local entities for a freeway service patrol operations. It is in the public interest to establish minimum standards for the emergency roadside assistance provided or contracted. It is also necessary to increase the public input into the development of minimum standards. It is important to the public safety that drivers who provide emergency roadside service do not have criminal records which would include violent crimes against persons.

The Legislature of California also declares that the Department of the California Highway Patrol, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, shall be responsible for establishing the minimum training standards for highway service organization employees and employers who participate in freeway service patrol operations.

With the passage of the Freeway Service Patrol Act in September 1992. The Freeway Service Patrol was established as a pilot program to study the feasibility of the Legislatures Intent and serve as a means of congestion relief. The Los Angeles County Transportation Commission, now known as Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol's (CHP) Southern Division pioneered the current freeway service patrol program in June 1991 with Proposition C sales tax revenue.

Public partnerships were formed between the local transportation authorities, the CHP and Caltrans. Caltrans provides millions of dollars annually for programs that operate throughout the state.

In general, the local transportation authorities and Caltrans provide funding for the FSP programs. Operationally, the transportation authorities contract directly with tow companies to provide services, Caltrans is responsible for CHP vehicle fleet and the CHP is responsible for training and supervision of the tow companies. In the Riverside-San Bernardino areas, CHP's Inland Division trains the tow truck drivers and owners and inspects the trucks and tow facilities for contract compliance and safety. These responsibilities vary throughout the various regional programs.

### **1.C SCOPE OF PROGRAM**

While FSP operators (hereinafter called "operators") are in the spotlight for all the services they provide, there are four organizations in the background that provide support and direction. These organizations include the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), the California Highway Patrol (CHP), and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

### **1.C.1 RIVERSIDE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (RCTC)**

RCTC is the transportation authority of Riverside County. RCTC advertises awards and manages the tow truck company's contracts. RCTC oversees the means in which the Riverside County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (RC-SAFE) budget is used with the approval of the RCTC Board of Directors. RCTC provides an additional 25%, which is added to the Caltrans budget to operate the FSP program. RCTC is the contract administrator for other programs interested in using FSP to supply services within county construction projects. RCTC is the contract administrator of the FSP program and will disburse funds to the Contractor only after verification and payment approval has been given by the CHP.

### **1.C.2 SAN BERNARDINO ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS (SANBAG)**

SANBAG is the transportation authority of San Bernardino County. SANBAG advertises awards and manages the tow truck company's contracts. SANBAG provides an additional 25%, which is added to the Caltrans budget to operate the FSP program. SANBAG is the contract administrator for programs interested in using the FSP to supply services within county construction projects. SANBAG is the contract administrator of the FSP program and will disburse funds to the Contractor only after verification and payment approval has been given by the CHP.

### **1.C.3 CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL (CHP)**

CHP is responsible for the daily operations and supervision of the program. Their duties include:

- Providing initial and annual refresher training to all FSP tow operators.
- Providing field supervision.
- Conducting ride-a-longs.
- Conducting background checks of prospective FSP applicants.
- Performing planned tow inspections.
- Performing random and cursory tow inspections.
- Evaluating the operators' job performance.
- Investigating complaints.
- Dispatching FSP tow trucks.
- Evaluating statistical data for the on-going evaluation of the program.

- Managing beat maps and drop locations.
- Updating the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual.
- Processing the monthly adjustments (overtime, deductions, material costs).

#### **1.C.4 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CALTRANS)**

Caltrans' duties include:

- Providing funding and oversight for the FSP programs.

#### **1.D OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the FSP program is to provide a continuous roving patrol for the rapid removal of disabled vehicles and those involved in minor accidents from the freeway. Where traffic conditions permit, they provide safe removal of small debris.

FSP vehicles will continually patrol assigned beats during hours of operation. FSP hours of operation are 0530 - 0830 and 1500 - 1900, Monday through Thursday; and 0530 - 0830 and 1300 - 1900 on Friday. FSP hours are subject to change.

Vehicles are exclusively dedicated to the service during the hours of operation. All maintenance activities shall be conducted during non-service hours.

Some of the many duties the service patrol operators provide are to change flat tires, provide jump starts, provide one (1) gallon of gasoline or diesel fuel, temporarily tape or repair cooling system hoses and refill radiators.

Operators are to spend a *maximum* of ten (10) minutes per disablement in an attempt to repair a vehicle.

If a vehicle cannot be repaired within the ten (10) minute limit, it will be towed to a drop location designated by the CHP.

Service patrol operators shall not accept gratuities, perform secondary towing services, recommend secondary tows or recommend repair/body shop businesses.

#### **1.E VEHICLE CODE REQUIREMENTS (CONTRACTOR)**

Tow companies contracted by a regional or local agency to provide services in an FSP program, who hire or assign tow truck drivers to that program, must comply with the following Vehicle Code sections:

- 1808.1(b) VC      Employers must participate in the pull notice system which is a process for providing the employer with a report of the driver's current driving record indicating any subsequent

