



Rapid Incident Scene Clearance Program

In 2004, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) implemented the nation's first Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) program in an effort to meet Florida's **Open Roads Policy** of clearing major incidents from roadways in 90 minutes or less.

FTE's RISC program is incentive leveraged, providing qualified tow and clearance contractors the opportunity to earn bonuses for clearing major lane blockages within specific time limits.



The FTE has contracted with seven towing organizations that presently provide coverage on over 90 percent of the FTE's statewide roadway system. The contractors respond to major incidents involving tractor trailers or other large vehicles on Florida's Turnpike mainline, the Sawgrass Expressway (Toll 869), the Southern Connector Extension and the Seminole Expressway (Toll 417), the BeachLine Expressway West (Toll 528), and the Veterans Expressway/Suncoast Parkway (Toll 589).

RISC contractors are required to respond to major incidents with two certified 50-ton plus heavy duty wreckers, one of which must be a rotator, plus a support vehicle carrying clean-up and maintenance of traffic equipment. Contractors earn a \$2,500 bonus if they respond to the incident site within 45 minutes with one heavy duty wrecker, 60 minutes with all equipment, and clear the roadway to traffic within 90 minutes of the Florida Highway Patrol's (FHP) notice to proceed for clearance work. If the contractor fails to open the roadway within 150 minutes, they are penalized \$10 for each minute over.

The FTE's RISC program has been activated almost 500 times in the first 7 years of the program.



When the RISC program has been activated, the tow contractors have successfully re-opened the roadway to Turnpike customers within 90 minutes of FHP's notice to begin work more than 95 percent of the time. In the most recent two years, RISC tow contractors have averaged 48 minutes to respond to the incident scene with all forms of equipment and they have averaged 50 minutes to clear the roadway. It is important to note that these incidents primarily involved large size (DOT Class 8) trucks, sometimes overturned with debris/cargo spilled across the roadway.

“The RISC program is the single most important thing which can be done to prevent and relieve traffic backups due to crashes or other incidents,” said retired FHP Troop K Commander Chief Jim Lee. “While some delays are inevitable, having a mechanism in place to rapidly respond and remove obstacles to free traffic flow yields benefits to the public which is far beyond its cost. Major incidents are being resolved quicker and reducing delays on our roads.”

Prior to the RISC program, the FTE did not have a standardized procedure for responding quickly to major traffic incidents of this nature. Often incident responders were dispatched to an accident without the proper equipment to clear the roads in a timely manner, resulting in lengthy delays to Turnpike customers. As a result of the RISC program, major incidents are cleared more quickly, resulting in less delay to our customers.

An integral part of the RISC program is the post-incident debriefing process. Following each RISC activation, the FTE reviews, debriefs, and prepares a detailed incident report. All of the parties involved in responding to the incident are brought together to openly discuss the incident details, what went well and where improvement could be gained. The incident report describes the incident, the actions of the involved parties, and the lessons learned from the incident.

“Through our debriefings, we continue to learn about the program’s strengths and weaknesses,” Lee said. “We will build upon our strengths and work to minimize our weaknesses. The Turnpike Enterprise is an innovator and we are constantly trying to improve our services to our customers.”



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RISC Results CY 2007-2010 (Total Duration)

