

A Live Lesson in Incident Management at the National Traffic Management & Work Zone Safety Conference

Hundreds of attendees watched live as the Broward County Incident Management Team conducted a multiple-vehicle accident and roll-over recovery to demonstrate "quick" clearance techniques used every day along the state's highways. Known as Rapid Incident Scene Clearance, the program was started on Florida's Turnpike in 2004. It's only used for major wrecks involving big rigs and hazardous fuel spills that close the highway or will block lanes for an extended period.

Traffic managers simulated a wreck onsite at the Greater Broward County Conference Center, involving two cars and a dump truck on I-95. The truck overturned on its side, spilling a load of rock and leaking fuel on the highway.

The team arrived at the simulated crash with a heavy-duty wrecker, a huge front-end loader, a street sweeper and a trailer loaded with brooms, cones, traffic arrows, ready-dry for vehicle fluid spills, and a variety of other equipment. On I-95, the state uses a rotation system in dispatching wreckers to crashes. Smaller companies do not have the equipment needed to move large trucks, causing delays when backup help is needed.

Ten years ago, an incident like this would have blocked traffic for up to five hours. Today, with specialized techniques, the highway may be able to reopen in an hour or less.

Cutting the time that highways are shut down can save millions in lost time and productivity for motorists stuck in long backups. According to transportation officials, the value of the saving ranges from \$15 an hour for the average commuter to \$70 an hour for commercial vehicles.

Quick and safe clearance also decreases secondary crashes and reduces the number of police officers and tow truck operators injured or killed while working a crash. On the Florida turnpike, the duration of serious crashes has been cut about 30 minutes.

More information about this program can be found by visiting www.SMARTSunGuide.com.

