



## SAFETY SERVICE PATROL IDEA SHARING NETWORK PROACTIVELY PROMOTING PATROL ROI AND VALUE

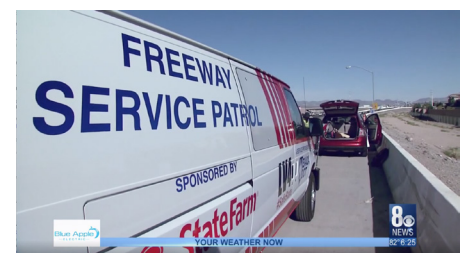
As the economic impact of COVID-19 begins to be realized by departments of transportation and tollroad authorities across the country, budgets will be tightened and public services will be at risk of losing vital funding. In June 2020, Kentucky Transportation Safety Cabinet saw its entire budget for the Safety Assistance for Freeway Emergencies (S.A.F.E.) patrol cut in a single legislative session. There was no forewarning and no opportunity to repel the decision. In two weeks time, on July 1, 2020, the Kentucky S.A.F.E. patrol ceased operation. Before your Safety Service Patrol program comes under threat, it is important to be proactive, to promote your patrol services, and to create a highly targeted campaign to demonstrate your patrol's return on investment to state decision makers.

### WHAT TO DO

- **Be proactive.** Do not wait to build the case in support of your Safety Service Patrol. You may not have time when the decision comes down. Instead, build the case now and promote it widely.
- **Promote, promote, promote.** Make sure everyone in your organization knows about your Safety Service Patrol—what it does, who it helps, why it exists, and how it has proven to be one of the most vital traffic incident management programs in the nation.
- **Know your audience.** Craft the message to meet your audience. Are they short on time? Stick to single sheet overviews and bullet points. Are they most concerned about traffic incidents? Prioritize and focus on the benefits of Safety Service Patrols in reducing secondary incidents and incident recovery time. Position these talking points toward the beginning of your case, saving the many other benefits for the end or the next follow-up message.
- **Anticipate objections.** Draft materials in a manner that responds directly to potential concerns and objections raised by the audience member. For example, “Why is the state funding a AAA service?” It's not! The state funds a traffic incident management program, which offers motorist assistance as one of many vital services. Propose and show alternate solutions; consider fewer coverage hours, or a reduced coverage area.
- **Maintain a consistent message.** Create a campaign of information to feed through your channels. Keep the messages flowing and top of mind. Avoid single hits or one chance catch-all documents that will be forgotten over time.
- **Be present and stay relevant.** Take advantage of internal publications and other opportunities to remind the entire agency of the great work performed by the Safety Service Patrol. Work with your Public Information Officer to keep patrol work in the news. Share positive motorist feedback far and wide. Leverage national awareness weeks: “National Public Service Recognition Week” and “National Traffic Incident Response Week” (for example) to raise awareness about your program.



In the Q3 2020 issue of *TIM Responder*, a magazine published by Florida DOT, the Road Rangers are prominently featured, including assist and incident stats by district and two full pages recognizing “Road Heroes” of the Road Rangers. Leadership would be hard pressed to not recognize their value!



Nevada DOT's Public Information Office ensures the Freeway Service Patrol is regularly featured on the local news, like this clip from Channel 8's Summer Driving Tips. It's hard to cut a program that receives such positive press!

## SAFETY SERVICE PATROL IDEA SHARING NETWORK

### PROACTIVELY PROMOTING PATROL ROI AND VALUE

#### VITAL RESOURCES

- **Benefit cost tool.** The [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\) Office of Operations has made a Tool for Operations Benefit-Cost Analysis](#) to be utilized by state agencies to “provide support and guidance to transportation practitioners in the application of benefit/cost analysis”. Use it to make the case for the benefits of Safety Service Patrols, which have been proven to deliver significantly greater benefits over their cost to operate (as high as 42:1).
- **Patrol data.** Track, analyze, and report on patrol activity regularly. Demonstrate how the Safety Service Patrol supports and enhances traffic incident management. What are the response times? How does it translate to lives saved? Add a 1.5 load factor\* to total incidents involving motorists to demonstrate the number of people touched by the patrols. Take a page out of Maryland DOT’s book and work with a local university to create studies and draw data-backed conclusions on the benefits of your patrol. Go beyond the single assist to demonstrate the bigger picture of how the patrol creates connections between your agency and the traveling public.
- **Industry studies.** Seek out industry studies showing the return on investment for Safety Service Patrols across the country (see [SafeHighways.org/Resources](#)). Look to your neighbors, your colleagues, and fellow Safety Service Patrollers for ideas on how to quantify and qualify the benefits of patrol services. Leverage these studies in direct relation to your patrol. Draw parallels. Focus on safety, people, and how the industry studies illustrate a direct benefit back to your target audience’s priorities. Cite your sources.
- **Motorist comments.** Feedback from the traveling public can be one of the most powerful tools in demonstrating the value of a program. Depending on the audience, the power can come from the words or the experience of a single motorist, or by quantifying the overwhelming number of comments received in a given time period. Who wants to be responsible for cutting a program that receives tens of thousands rave reviews each year? Share these comments far and wide. Get one from a celebrity, prominent public figure, or one that pulls at the heart strings and excessively compliments your agency—share it or better still ask the Secretary or Commissioner to share it!
- **Media and press articles, publications, broadcasts, social posts, etc.** If it generated positive public attention for the patrol, make it known! Share positive press internally and externally. Work with your Public Information Office to get more positive news mentions. Quantify the reach and return on these articles. How many impressions did it generate? What is the equivalent media value if the DOT had to purchase marketing instead of organically generating press from this program? Show examples.
- **Video.** Increasingly audiences are becoming accustomed to learning visually and videos are becoming more and more popular. Work with your agency’s videographer to capture b-roll of the patrol in action. Overlap the video with motorist comments, interject key patrol incident stats, and create a brief 1-2 minute segment for posting to YouTube, on social media, and delivery via email to your key audiences.

#### WHO TO INVOLVE

Spread your Safety Service Patrol messaging far and wide. Consider who has decision making power and influence inside and outside of your organization. Seek out advocates and strong voices, including:

- Legislators
- Secretaries
- Commissioners
- Directors
- Public Information Officers
- Key Decision Makers
- Supervisors



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\*Traffic Audit Bureau uses a 1.5 load factor to convert vehicles passing into people passing.