



NEWS RELEASE

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Road construction restricted, services expanded on Florida's Turnpike during holidays



OCOE, FL - Nearly all construction related lane closures and restrictions on Florida's Turnpike operated roads are suspended from noon Tuesday, December 23, through 11:59 p.m. Sunday, January 4, in anticipation of heavy traffic volumes. Florida's Turnpike Enterprise consists of the following limited-access toll roads:

- The Turnpike Mainline, extending from Homestead in Dade County north to Wildwood in Sumter County
- The Seminole Expressway and Southern Connector (Toll 417) in Seminole, Orange and Osceola counties
- The Bee Line Expressway West (Toll 528) in Orange County
- The Polk Parkway (Toll 570) in Polk County
- The Veterans Expressway and Suncoast Parkway in Hillsborough, Pasco and Hernando counties (Toll 589)
- The Sawgrass Expressway (Toll 869) in Broward County.

MOTORIST AID

The Road Rangers—who regularly patrol the Turnpike in specially-equipped pickup trucks and provide motorists with free roadside assistance for their disabled vehicles—will work extended hours to assist travelers in reaching their destinations. On Wednesday, December 24, Sunday, December 28, and Wednesday, December 31, Road Rangers will patrol continuously between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. To ensure that bowl game fans arrive at their destinations on time, on New Year's Day, Road Rangers will provide continuous service from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the metro Orlando area, and 'round-the-clock from 6 a.m. Thursday, January 1, to 2 a.m. Friday, January 2, in the greater Miami-Dade area.

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Additionally, motorist aid call boxes are located every mile along both sides of the Turnpike mainline for travelers who need police, ambulance or roadway services. These are not voice communication devices; instead, electronic signals are transmitted to the Florida Highway Patrol, which dispatches the necessary service vehicles. Motorists may also dial *FHP (*347) or 911 on a cellular phone for assistance. If calling for assistance via cell phone, please be prepared to give an approximate mile-marker and travel direction to the dispatcher—especially important in remote and rural areas.

TOLL PLAZAS

Drivers approaching toll plazas should be alert for congestion and be prepared to stop. Blue highway signs, which are located about a quarter of a mile in advance of the plaza, list toll prices for two-axle (passenger) vehicles. Overhead signs above the lane also show the amount and the fee is posted electronically at the gate as well.

Mainline toll plazas feature at least one lane, attendant-staffed 24-hours per day and motorists who need change, receipts, or even directions, should look for an overhead green sign. Motorists with exact change should look for a blue sign mounted above the lane.

Overhead signs with white backgrounds denote SunPass®-Only lanes, which accommodate the State of Florida's prepaid electronic toll collection system. Electronic toll transponders from other states (or Canada) are not compatible and traveling through a SunPass lane without the correct transponder will result in a toll violation. Violators are subject to a \$100 fine. Some staffed and cash lanes also process SunPass transactions and those lanes are marked with a SunPass logo.

Not all ramp (exit and entrance) plazas are staffed, so motorists should be prepared to have exact change at these interchanges, especially after 7 p.m. or on weekends. Toll collection baskets do not make change and drivers should not attempt to insert paper currency in the machinery. Quarters are preferred, but coin baskets accept any combination of nickels, dimes and quarters. A roll of quarters may be purchased from an attendant at any mainline toll plaza. SunPass equipment does not accept credit or debit cards and inserting them in the machine may result in the loss of or damage to the card.

While the northern and southern sections of the Turnpike mainline employ the coin system of toll collection, this mostly rural area is on the ticket system. Motorists traveling

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between Three Lakes in Osceola County, and Lantana in Palm Beach County, will receive an electronically-created toll card showing their point of origin and time they traveled through the

This card is not a SunPass and travelers should not use it to travel through SunPass-only lanes, as they will receive a violation notice.

TRAFFIC INFORMATION UPDATES

Travelers should pay careful attention to overhead lighted message boards and tune to the Highway Advisory Radio (1640 AM) for updated Turnpike traffic advisories. Flashing yellow lights on the blue Highway Advisory Radio signs indicate an important message is being broadcast. In South Florida (Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties), motorists may call 511 on their cellular phones for frequently updated traveler information for both the Turnpike and Interstates 95 and 595. In the Orlando metro area, motorists may call 511 for traffic information on the Interstate 4 attractions corridor.

TAKE A COFFEE SAFETY BREAK ON THE TURNPIKE

Florida's Turnpike, Florida Highway Patrol Troop K and HMS Host urge drivers to take a Safety Break if they become fatigued. During the heaviest travel days, motorists may stop at any 24-hour restaurant in any Turnpike Service plaza, or at a Turnpike Citgo or Exxon service station and help themselves to a free cup of coffee. Drivers must promise the attendant that they and their passengers will buckle up to Survive the Drive. This complimentary pick-me-up is available noon, Wednesday, December 24, through 6 a.m. Christmas Day; 11 p.m., Sunday, December 28, through 6 a.m., Monday, December 29, and 11 p.m., Wednesday, December 31, through 6 a.m., New Year's Day.

TRAVELER SERVICES

Gas stations in all Turnpike service plazas are open 24 hours per day. Vehicle road services are also available for a charge in areas where Road Rangers do not patrol, as well as wrecker and towing services. Towing services are AAA approved. Services available at the Citgo stations include such minor repairs as hose and fan belt replacement, battery charges and boosts, and tire care and cooling system service. No repair work is available at the Exxon station at the Snapper Creek plaza. Restrooms and vending machines are located at every service station in addition to the restrooms at the restaurant/information facilities. Except for Pompano Beach,

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all service plazas are equipped with family-style restrooms. Changing tables are available in both men's and women's restrooms.

All eight service plazas, which are located approximately every 35 miles along the mainline, provide nighttime, armed security. Due to limited parking spaces, overnight parking is prohibited and vehicles may be towed at the owner's expense.

AAA EXPRESS DESK

AAA Operates Express Desks at the Ft. Pierce (Milepost 144) and Turkey Lake (Milepost 263) Service Plazas.

Express Desks offer information, attraction tickets, hotel reservation and AAA membership sales only. Holiday hours of operation are:

AAA FORT PIERCE

- Open Monday - Sunday - 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., except as follows:
- Closed Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25, 2003
- Open on New Year's Day, Thursday, January 1, 2004 from 8 a.m.- 6 p.m.

AAA TURKEY LAKE

- Open Monday-Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday-Sunday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Open Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24, 2003, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Closed Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25, 2003
- Open on New Year's Eve, Wednesday, December 31, 2003, and on New Year's Day, Thursday, January 1, 2004, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

A FRIENDLY REMINDER FROM FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL:

BUCKLE UP, MOVE OVER AND SURVIVE THE DRIVE

A new law designed to protect law enforcement and other emergency workers on Florida highways requires drivers to "move over" or "slow down" when approaching an authorized emergency vehicle stopped on a highway in Florida are required to vacate the lane closest to the emergency vehicle as soon as it is safe to do so. This new statute applies when a motorist is traveling on an interstate or other highway with two or more lanes traveling in the same direction as the law enforcement or emergency vehicle. If the posted speed limit is 20 miles per hour or less when approaching a law enforcement or other authorized emergency vehicle parked on a

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two-lane roadway with their emergency lights activated, motorists must travel at five miles per hour. They must slow to a speed that is 20 miles per hour less than the posted speed limit when the posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour or greater.

Visit the <http://www.fhp.state.fl.us/html/MoveOver.html> for more information on the *Move Over Act*.