

## **Safety Initiatives for Holiday Traffic**

The New Jersey Department of Transportation, along with Governor James E. McGreevey, continues to make a solid commitment to the safety of all motorists in this state. In particular, this holiday weekend we are highlighting a number of traffic safety initiatives that are either yearlong programs, or are special measures that will be in place during the holiday weekend. We realize that New Jersey is a terrific vacation destination, and it is our goal to make sure that all motorists complete their drive safely and quickly, so that families can enjoy themselves and the best of our state this holiday weekend. Listed below are a number of these safety initiatives and some important facts about each one :

### **Express E-ZPass**

Express E-ZPass removes tollbooths from the roadway at targeted toll plazas and replaces them with overhead gantries with E-ZPass reading equipment built into them.

Rather than slowing down to 15 mph, motorists can travel through the new lanes at posted highway speeds – up to 65 mph.

Express E-ZPass lanes have already been installed at the Interchange 18W toll plaza on the NJ Turnpike, Pascack Valley toll plaza on the Garden State Parkway and the Pleasantville toll plaza on the AC Expressway.

The entire program, unveiled in October 2002 by Governor McGreevey, is expected to be complete by summer of 2005.

### **Reach the Beach Campaign**

This campaign, started 5 years ago, was such a success, that most of the elements are now part of our Standard operating procedures have been permanently installed in the field.

The concept of the project is to utilize smart highway technology to monitor traffic conditions and inform motorists of delays and other routes to travel. The project consists of :

Extended Emergency Service Patrol(ESP) areas and hours during the summer. Most of the extended hours and areas are now part of our normal patrols. Extended Traffic Operations Center hours are now 24/7.

Disaster Planning/Hurricane Evacuation Plans - we now have formal evacuation plans for Cape May County, Atlantic City, Long Beach Island, and the I-195 corridor.

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Diversion Plans - We have pre-planned routes to divert traffic around incidents completed for 13 of 21 counties statewide. In addition, there are surveillance cameras and variable message signs(VMS) installed to support our Reach the Beach program.

### **#95 To The Rescue**

Drivers are reminded of the Turnpike's special cellular phone number, #95, which can be used to report disabled vehicles. Calls are toll and airtime free with most major New Jersey cellular suppliers. Any motorist with a cellular phone can expedite aid to disabled vehicles by simply dialing this number. Callers should note the nearest mile marker, the direction of travel and a description of the vehicle.

### **#GSP (#477)**

The service allows customers on the Garden State Parkway to dial #477 on their cellular phones to report accidents, disabled vehicles, and debris along the Parkway that may be a safety hazard or impede the flow of traffic.

Customers should continue to dial 911 for emergencies. All cell carriers are proud to provide this service to NJ customers at no extra cost and patrons who utilize the #GSP system will not use their personal time when calling.

Motorists, who report potential problems on the Parkway, are encouraged to provide the nearest exit, milepost, a brief description of the problem and any other important facts that may help Parkway staff to effectively address the problem.

### **Click It or Ticket Program**

The Click It or Ticket/Operation ABC Mobilization for May 2004 plays a critical role in the effort to keep people safe on our nation's roads and highways.

From May 24-June 6, 2004 law enforcement agencies nationwide are conducting Click It or Ticket campaigns that incorporate zero-tolerance enforcement of safety belt laws with a special emphasis on teens. These efforts — coupled with paid advertising and the support of government agencies, local coalitions and school officials — will result in dramatic increases in safety belt use and will defend us against one of the greatest threats to us all — traffic crashes.

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## **#77**

#77 was created in March of 1997 with the Office of Highway Traffic Safety, NJDOT and the New Jersey State Police. It is intended to enable drivers to call #77 from their cell phone to report aggressive drivers.

Since June 2003, NJDOT, the Garden State Parkway and the NJ Turnpike began displaying the #77 message on electronic message boards statewide.

The signs were posted at the request of the Governor's Highway Safety Task Force. Calls, which are routed to the NJ State Police, have grown by 600%, from an average of 100 calls a day to nearly 600.

The action was taken in response to two fatal motor vehicle crashes over last years Memorial Day weekend on I-78.

## **Smart Traveler**

Smartraveler.com provides traffic information directly to the public in cities where we have partnerships with public transportation agencies. The Westwood One Company provides real time traffic information in 83 U.S. cities. Specifically in New Jersey, information technology provides real time information for Interstate 295, Routes 70, 73, 38 and 42 in the Camden area.