

Program Overview

A Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) is a public service comprised of a fleet of tow and pickup trucks which patrol designated portions (beats) of freeways during morning and afternoon commute hours clearing accidents and removing debris to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety. FSPs have effectively reduced traffic congestion in urban areas throughout California. Twelve other counties currently operate FSP programs. The new program in this county would be jointly managed by SBCAG and the California Highway Patrol with assistance from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). During the A.M. commute period, (6:30 AM – 9:30 AM), the FSP program would operate on the 101 freeway from the Ventura County Line to Milpas Street. In the P.M. commute period (4:30 PM – 7:30 PM), FSP trucks would cover the 101 from Patterson Avenue to Padaro Lane. FSP coverage will be from Monday to Friday.



Services

Services are administered by SBCAG under a contract with a local towing firm, Bob Holzer Towing and Storage. The trucks are dispatched by the California Highway Patrol and are able to respond very quickly to accidents, vehicle breakdowns, etc. Services provided by an FSP include:

- Changing flat tires
- Jump starting cars
- Refilling radiators and taping leaky hoses
- Putting a gallon of fuel in gas tanks
- If the FSP cannot get the car running in a few minutes, it will tow the car, free of charge to a safe location off the freeway
- Clearing vehicles damaged in collisions under CHP direction
- Removing debris from traffic lanes under CHP direction

Benefits

In addition to serving individual motorists as noted above, an FSP program provides congestion relief, safety and air quality benefits by:

- Reducing traffic jams by quickly clearing stalled cars which are one of the major causes of traffic congestion
- Reducing the chance of further accidents and bottlenecks caused by impatient drivers and onlookers
- Saving fuel and cutting air polluting emissions by reducing stop-and-go traffic
- Keeping narrowed lanes clear during highway construction projects

Funding

Funding for the FSP program in Santa Barbara, Placer and San Bernardino counties was secured with the assistance of Assemblymember Pedro Nava. SBCAG received \$210,913 in state funds dedicated to FSP for the 2005-06 fiscal year. SBCAG will be eligible to receive FSP state funding annually assuming that funding continues to be included in the state budget for the program. It is important to note that these state grant funds may only be used to implement and operate an FSP Program. If an FSP program is not implemented in Santa Barbara County, these funds would be forfeited and returned to the state.

SBCAG is required to provide a 25% local match on FSP state funds. The local match is provided by a \$1.00 state fee charged per vehicle registered in the county that SBCAG receives as the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE). The only current program that SAFE revenues are used for is the countywide highway call box system. SAFE funds not used for the call box program may be used to meet the match requirements for state FSP funds. Legislation passed last year reserves the use of additional funds from the call box program for motorist aid programs only (eg. callboxes and FSP's). These funds cannot be used to add lanes or subsidize transit service.