

2012 Legislative Update

The 2012 Florida Legislative Session brought forth many changes. Some of the changes that our criminal justice partners may want to know about are:

Autonomous Vehicle – Effective July 1

Florida law now defines an “autonomous vehicle” as any vehicle equipped with autonomous technology that allows the vehicle to be operated without the active control of a human operator.

Beginning July 1, a person who possesses a valid driver license may operate an autonomous vehicle in autonomous mode on a Florida roadway if manufacturers of the technology designate the person as a driver for testing purposes. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles must submit a report to the Florida Legislature by Feb. 12, 2014, with recommendations for additional legislation or regulatory action that may be required for safe testing and operation.



Long-Form Crash Reports – Effective July 1

Florida law expands the requirements for law enforcement officers to use a long-form crash report to include crashes involving a person with indication of pain or discomfort, a crash rendering a vehicle inoperable and all crashes involving a commercial motor vehicle.

All crashes occurring on the public roadways of the state, not requiring a long-form shall require the use of a short-form or driver exchange form.

The \$500 threshold for property damage relating to crash reports is removed from statute.

Traffic Laws

Effective July 1

A straight truck may tow no more than one trailer, and the overall length combination of the truck-trailer may not exceed 68 feet.

Effective Oct. 1

Law enforcement may issue a bicycle safety brochure in lieu of a violation of section 316.2065(8), Florida Statute.

Effective Jan. 1, 2013

■ Motorists may intermittently flash their headlights at oncoming traffic, without regard to intent.

■ Golf carts may cross the State Highway System if the posted speed limit is 45 mph or less.

■ Parents or legal guardians may not leave a child unattended in a motor vehicle for any period of time if the vehicle is running and the child appears to be in distress.

For a more comprehensive list of legislative updates related to DHSMV, visit <http://www.flhsmv.gov/Leg2012.htm>.

Data Center Move to Affect Services

Main effort of move to occur Sept. 7 – 9

The Department will move its data center from its Tallahassee headquarters to the state's primary data center, also in Tallahassee, in September. The main effort will take place during the weekend of Sept. 7 - 9. Services will come offline at 6 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time) Sept. 7. While the move is complex and will require a complete shutdown of all DHSMV enterprise systems, the Department has taken steps to ensure law enforcement inquiries, including the Driver And Vehicle Information Database (aka DAVID), will remain available.

Customers will not be able to access online services, and employees will not have access to work email accounts during the weekend of the move. If you speak to motorists whose driver licenses, identification cards or license plates expire on or before Sept. 7, please encourage them to visit an office or www.GoRenew.com before 6 p.m. Sept. 7.

In addition to the early September move, another phase of the move will take place beginning 6 p.m. Sept. 21. Online services will be unavailable during this phase, which the Department estimates will take up to two days to complete. DAVID and in-office services will not be affected.

The move is part of the state's Data Center Consolidation plan. In 2008, Florida lawmakers passed legislation that mandates all state agency data centers and computing facilities to consolidate into state primary data centers by 2019.

Does your driver license or
license plate **expire**
between **Sept. 7 - 9?**

Plan ahead and renew early!

Florida Promotes Submitting Crash Reports and Citations Electronically

There are 216 law enforcement agencies using E-Citations and 159 using E-Crash. Approximately 46 percent of the dispositions are submitted via E-Citations, and 58 percent of crash reports are submitted electronically. Current initiatives to promote use include:

■ The Department is consulting with law enforcement agencies throughout the state regarding funding applications to obtain computer laptops to increase electronic submission of crash reports. Through the initiative, the Department will award agencies with funding to purchase laptops, and other agencies will receive refurbished FHP laptops.

■ The Department is rewriting the Crash manual to document current crash business rules and procedures, as well as provide edits for software enhancements.

■ The E-Citation file transmitted to the clerks of court from law enforcement was updated to include the officer's certification that the citation was delivered to the driver.

■ Forty-five clerks of court currently receive E-Citation files from law enforcement agencies. Most of the clerks also require agencies to send the paper citations, too. However, seven clerks (Alachua, Leon, Manatee, Marion, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and St. Johns counties) have moved to a paperless process and are now receiving and processing electronic citation files for civil/traffic offenses in lieu of waiting for paper copies from law enforcement.

Florida Buckles Up in Record Numbers

In September 2011, DHSMV and the Florida Department of Transportation announced that a record number of Floridians are fastening their safety belts. Statewide safety belt use reached 88 percent in June 2011 following the *Click It or Ticket* safety belt campaign. In a news release, DHSMV Executive Director Julie Jones credited the improvement to effective laws and the efforts of law enforcement.

ECI Registrations Reach 6 Million Department Urges Floridians to Register Emergency Contact Information

Florida reached a new milestone in June 2012 – 6 million (out of 15 million) motorists in Florida have registered their contacts in the Department's Emergency Contact Information system. ECI allows licensed drivers and identification card holders to submit two contacts to notify in the event of an emergency, such as a vehicle crash. The information can then be accessed only in the case of an emergency by law enforcement officers to find designated contacts. Registration is quick and convenient. It can be completed in a state- or a tax collector-operated driver license office or from the convenience of home or work through the Internet at <https://services.flhsmv.gov/eci/>. You, too, can help the Department promote this valuable service by telling motorists, friends and family members about it.



FHP Announces New Leaders

In the past year, FHP has had new leaders take charge in different areas within the Patrol.

In September 2011, Lt. Col. Kelly Hildreth became the deputy director of field operations, where she leads patrol operations throughout the Sunshine State. Hildreth has been with the Patrol for 16 years and is the first female to reach the rank of lieutenant colonel.

In December 2011, Maj. Michael Thomas became the new troop commander to lead field operations in in the Tampa Bay area. Troop C comprises seven counties, including Pinellas, Hillsborough, Polk, Pasco, Hernando, Sumter and Citrus. Thomas began his FHP career in 1987.

In March, Maj. Mark Brown became the new director of FHP's training academy and responsible for recruiting and training new and current members of FHP. Brown has been with the Patrol since 1999.

In June, the Patrol named its newest troop commander in the troop that covers operations in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. Maj. Sammie Thomas Jr. is now the commander in Troop E. He has been with the Patrol for 30 years.



Hildreth



Thomas



Brown



Thomas

Online Crash Report Sales Show Promising Numbers

The Department launched a new service through BuyCrash.com that makes crash reports available for purchase online. Before Feb. 1, customers had to request crash reports by mail or in person at a Florida Highway Patrol station. Those options remain available, but the Department is promoting the new service provided through a no-cost contract. Savings across the state could amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in processing, postage, storage and retrieval costs.

As of July 2012, customers have purchased 4,841 crash reports online.

Florida License Plate to Get a Face Lift

The Department is redesigning the standard Florida license plate to make it easier for law enforcement officers and toll authorities to read. The committee developing the plate's new look began meeting in February. Members of the committee represent the Department, the law enforcement community, tax collectors and other state agencies and organizations.

The new design will bring us back to basics and provide a unique and clear personal identity of a vehicle and its owner, day or night. The committee will select three to five designs and post the designs on the Department's website this fall so the public can vote on their favorites.



Committee members visit the Union Correctional Institution to view how the Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises print the license plates.

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Can You Recognize a Staged Crash?

The Florida Highway Patrol has recognized the need for training in one of the leading insurance schemes in Florida known as *staged crashes*. FHP is collaborating with the National Insurance Crime Bureau and the Florida Department of Financial Services in a public awareness campaign to educate the public and members of law enforcement on the issue. The Patrol has begun to train its members on staged crashes through an online training course developed by NICB and the FHP Academy. During the training, troopers learn how to identify fraudulent schemes and recognize fraud indicators in crashes.

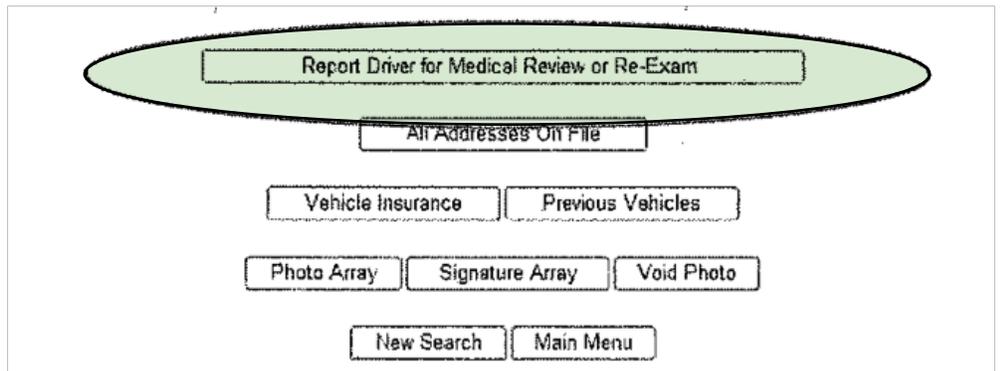
Law enforcement officers are the first line in the crash cycle, and reporting crashes in an accurate and complete manner will help stop fraudulent crash claims. Developing investigative skills that will help prevent insurance fraud will save the state of Florida millions in insurance payouts. Indicators that a crash may be staged are:

- junker cars are involved
- multiple passenger injuries
- medical claims are extensive, but collision damage is minor
- vehicles in the crash are taken to the same body shop
- addresses are post office boxes
- an overly enthusiastic witness
- in hit and runs, descriptions may be vague, or may involve a phantom vehicle
- passengers may not know each other
- the crash occurs in isolated areas to avoid witnesses

For more information regarding staged crashes, visit FHP's staged crashes website at www.flhsmv.gov/fhp/.

Reporting Drivers for Re-examination or Medical Review has Never Been Easier

The Department would like to remind you that in August 2010, we added a new feature to DAVID that makes it easy for law enforcement agencies to request a re-examination or medical review of a specific driver.



To access the reporting form, click the *Report Driver for Medical Review or Re-Exam* button on the Individual Summary page. The driver's personal information will pre-populate on the forms. After the information is verified, you will then select the medical reason(s) for the request and provide a brief explanation as to why you are reporting the individual as an at-risk driver. Upon completion of the form, click *submit* to transmit the information to the Department's Medical Review Section. This convenient feature allows the Department to take quick action on potentially dangerous drivers.

Floridians Continue to *Gather. Go. Get.* Driver Licenses with a Gold Star

One in three Florida drivers and identification card holders now have a credential with a gold star in the upper right corner. The star signifies the credential meets standard benchmarks established by the federal Real ID Act of 2005.

Florida began to require specific documents to obtain a new or renewed driver license or ID card beginning Jan. 1, 2010. Motorists can prepare for their next visit to a driver license office by visiting www.GatherGoGet.com. Gather. Go. Get. is on Facebook, too!

“V” is for Vet

Have you noticed a blue “V” on any driver licenses in the past year? If so, that is because lawmakers last year passed legislation that allows military veterans to add a veteran designation on a Florida driver license or ID card. Since July 2011, driver license offices have issued more than 58,000 credentials with a blue “V” in the bottom right corner to veterans who showed proof of honorable military service.



Disabled Parking Permits

In an effort to reduce fraudulent use of disabled parking permits, lawmakers passed legislation that requires documentation from a medical practitioner to renew or replace a blue disabled parking permit. The state requires permit holders to renew the permits every four years. The same documentation from a medical practitioner is required for those who must replace a permit.

A SAFER FLORIDA
HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES

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New Driver License & ID Card Requirements

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