

Hoosier Helper Freeway Service Patrol

The Hoosier Helpers patrol Indiana's busiest freeways in their distinctive trucks, helping stranded motorists, removing debris from the road or summoning help quickly in case of an accident, vehicle fire or other emergency. They can change a tire, supply enough fuel to get you to a service station, perhaps fix a minor mechanical problem, and certainly get you help for the problems they can't solve.

The Hoosier Helpers are the Indiana Department of Transportation's (INDOT's) freeway service patrol. But they do more than provide an extra measure of security and safety for motorists. They also keep traffic moving, and that makes them a key element in TrafficWise, Indiana's ITS program.



A Purdue University study of the Hoosier Helper program on the Borman Expressway near Gary - where Hoosier Helpers have aided about 15,000 motorists a year for the last decade - found that the Hoosier Helpers alleviate traffic congestion and reduce the number of secondary accidents. The net result is that every dollar spent on the Hoosier Helper program saves more than ten times that much in fuel and time that isn't wasted sitting in traffic.

On-board computers give the Hoosier Helpers direct access to the Borman Expressway's Traffic Management Center, enabling them to give travelers immediate information about traffic conditions. They can post advisories on the dynamic message signs, issue alerts via the highway advisory radio system and send out notices via the Internet or personal pagers.

INDOT currently has three Hoosier Helper programs statewide. The first program began in Northwestern Indiana on the Borman Expressway in August 1991 as a daytime program that expanded to 24/7 service in May 1996. The Indianapolis Hoosier Helpers began in August 1997 and operate weekdays and for special events. The Hoosier Helpers began serving the Indiana portion of metropolitan Louisville in May 1999 and operate weekdays and for special events.

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