Florida's Law Enforcement Liaison Program

Why Do We Have a Law Enforcement Liaison Program?

Florida's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) was developed as a long-term roadmap toward safer roadways. The 2023 SHSP outlines 13 Emphasis Areas, along with specific implementation strategies for each. Florida, along with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), sees active involvement of law enforcement as a key element in the creation of safer highways. In NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work guide, high-visibility enforcement and other traffic enforcement strategies are listed as evidence-based countermeasures in the nine highway safety program areas that are examined.

Florida designs and builds some of the best roads and bridges in the country, but to have the greatest traffic safety impact, great roads are not enough. A critical part of the process is law enforcement. Together, the Florida Highway Patrol, sheriffs, police departments, and state agencies conduct focused and high-visibility operations, creating the voluntary compliance that is necessary for safer roadways. However, traffic safety is just one of many priorities that local law enforcement agencies must address.

The challenges in Florida related to traffic enforcement are not unique. Focus areas for law enforcement span communication, training, coordination, and participation.

The Florida Law Enforcement Liaison (LEL) Program is a grant-funded program sponsored by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and NHTSA. The goals and objectives of the LEL Program are to partner with law enforcement agencies to promote and increase participation in the NHTSA national enforcement waves and the annual Florida Law Enforcement Liaison Traffic Safety Challenge to increase awareness of and participation in traffic safety-related efforts.

In order to keep highway safety a priority and continue the active, enthusiastic involvement of law enforcement, Florida has developed a proactive, engaged LEL program that facilitates ongoing communication and participation, fosters interagency coordination, and promotes the goals and priorities of the FDOT State Safety Office.









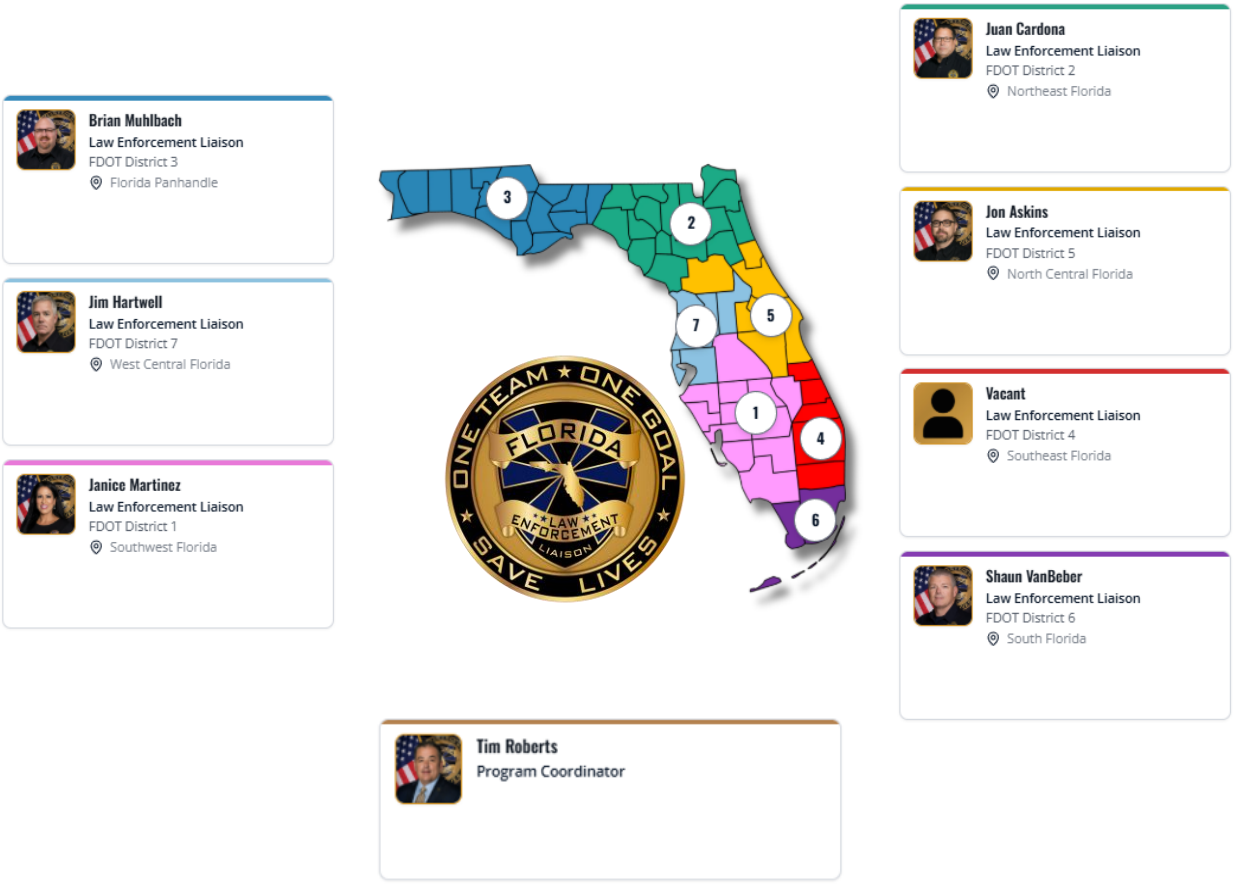
What is a Law Enforcement Liaison?

An LEL serves as a vital link and conduit between a State Highway Safety Office (SHSO) and that state's law enforcement community. LELs help promote and enhance state and national highway safety programs, initiatives, and campaigns and perform a myriad of functions, including planning, organizing, networking, promoting, recruiting, implementing, reporting, and evaluating law enforcement's role in traffic safety projects, activities, and achievements.

Florida's LELs are retired law enforcement officers and those still serving in reserve capacities working under a grant-funded program sponsored by FDOT and NHTSA. One of their most important tasks is to recruit and encourage state and local law enforcement participation in national and state traffic safety mobilizations, thus continuously working toward a culture of sustained and effective traffic enforcement programs. The involvement of state LELs has increased the number of law enforcement agencies participating in traffic safety activities, and this contributes to crash reductions.

Florida's Law Enforcement Liaison Program

Florida's LEL Program was established in 2000 and is currently staffed by eight members, made up of one coordinator and seven LELs assigned to each of the seven FDOT districts. The Florida LEL Team consists of experienced law enforcement professionals who bring more than 200 years of combined law enforcement experience.



Florida's Law Enforcement Liaisons' Primary Duties

Encourage and Support Law Enforcement Participation

NHTSA requires continued law enforcement participation in the following three national education and enforcement campaign waves for the state to receive federal funding:

Approximate Dates	Campaign	Target
May 15 – June 4	*Click It or Ticket*	Safety Belt Use
August 16 – September 4	*Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*	Impaired Driving Prevention
December 13 – 31	*Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*	Impaired Driving Prevention

Additional NHTSA Campaigns

In addition to the three required national campaigns, NHTSA strongly encourages states and law enforcement agencies to participate in additional education and enforcement campaigns:

Approximate Dates	Campaign	Target
July	*Operation Southern Slow Down*	Speeding Prevention
September	*Hands Across the Border*	Impaired Driving Prevention

Traffic Safety Coalitions

Florida's LEL program participates with the FDOT traffic safety coalitions. Currently at least one LEL sits on each of the following coalitions:

- Impaired Driving Coalition
- Motorcycle Safety Coalition
- Occupant Protection Coalition
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Coalition
- Safe Mobility for Life Coalition
- Traffic Records Coordinating Committee
- Teen Safe Driving Coalition

Florida's Law Enforcement Liaison Program

Subgrant Opportunities

The Florida LEL program assists the FDOT State Safety Office in helping law enforcement agencies apply for subgrants from FDOT to support increased traffic safety enforcement. FDOT awards subgrants to traffic safety partners that undertake priority-area programs and activities to improve traffic safety and reduce crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities. Subgrants may be awarded to address traffic safety deficiencies, expand an ongoing activity, or develop a new program. The LEL program assists agencies with identifying crash data for the grant year, reviews current enforcement-focused efforts, and provides best-practice approaches for the 13 Emphasis Areas of the data-driven Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).

District Community Traffic Safety Teams

Each FDOT district has multiple Community Traffic Safety Teams (CTSTs) that focus on local projects to reduce crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities. The Florida LEL program assists the district CTSTs in raising awareness and providing safety resources to their local areas using data driven approaches to address areas with the highest number of crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities. The Florida LELs participate with all the active CTSTs, with each district currently having the following number of CTST teams:

- District 1 – 9 CTSTs
- District 2 – 8 CTSTs
- District 3 – 13 CTSTs
- District 4 – 4 CTSTs
- District 5 – 8 CTSTs
- District 6 – 2 CTSTs
- District 7 – 6 CTSTs

Law Enforcement Coordination

The Florida LEL program regularly assists many federal, state, local, and nonprofit agencies with any needed assistance for coordination with law enforcement agencies participating in traffic safety initiatives. Agencies regularly assisted include:

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
- Florida Highway Patrol (FHP)
- Florida Sheriff's Association (FSA)
- Florida Police Chief's Association (FPCA)
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)

Florida Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Challenge

The Florida Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Challenge was started in 2010 and recognizes the best overall traffic safety programs in Florida. The areas of concentration include efforts to enforce traffic safety laws and educate the public about distracted and impaired driving, motorcycle safety, occupant protection and child passenger safety, pedestrian and bicycle safety, speed and aggressive driving, and other areas that impact the safety of roadway users.

Through the Challenge, the state's seven Law Enforcement Liaisons (LELs) work with local, county, and state law enforcement agencies to encourage participation in state mobilizations and the three NHTSA national traffic safety mobilizations and campaigns. Law enforcement agencies are encouraged to conduct routine enforcement patrols to address program areas, as well as high-visibility enforcement operations (i.e., saturation patrols and checkpoints), educational programs, and earned media activities.

Participating agencies submit applications through the Florida Law Enforcement Liaison Program website by a given deadline. Evaluation of the safety programs and efforts of the agencies submitting applications is based on the following:

- Policy & Guidelines
- Training of Officers
- Officer Recognition
- LEL Program Participation
- Public Information & Education
- Traffic Enforcement Activity
- Traffic Safety Effectiveness

Florida Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Challenge Training and Recognition Event (2010-2026)



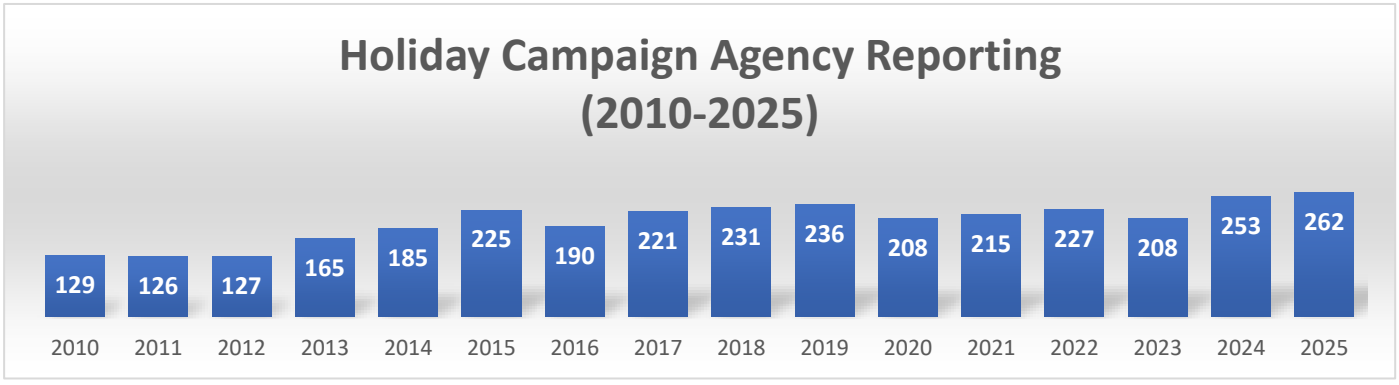
NHTSA *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* Campaign Waves

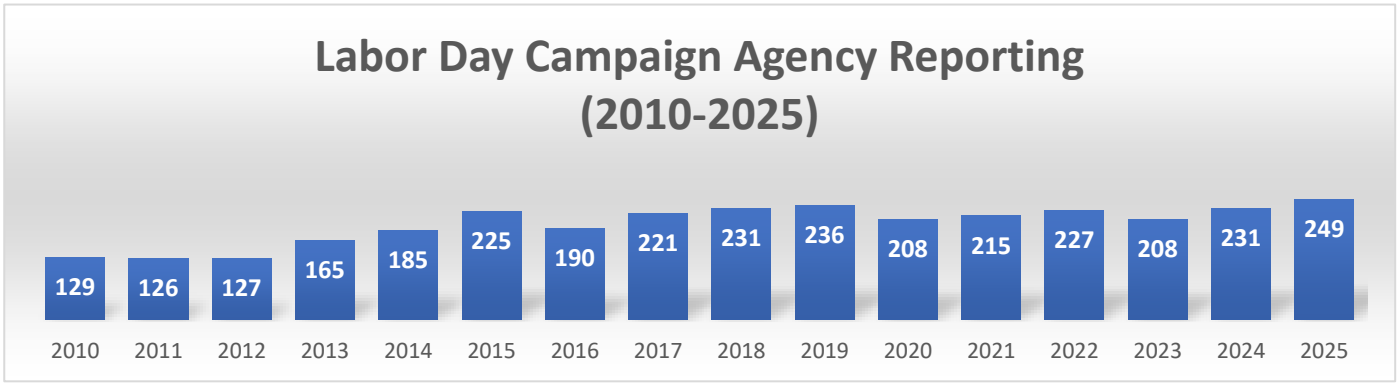
One condition of the traffic safety federal funding requires Florida to have law enforcement agencies participate in the two national *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* campaigns.

Because of the impaired driving campaigns' importance to highway safety, and the central role that law enforcement plays in the initiative, Florida developed the Florida LEL Impaired Driving Awareness Program to encourage enthusiastic involvement through the use of educational printed materials. The program is designed to keep Impaired Driving enforcement as a priority throughout Florida and maintain the high participation levels of the crackdown's most important component: law enforcement.

The goal of the program is to reduce the number of alcohol-related crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities that occur on Florida's roadways by encouraging law enforcement agencies to increase their emphasis on routine impaired driving enforcement and high visibility DUI enforcement operations (sobriety checkpoints), increase DUI enforcement training among law enforcement personnel, and promote public awareness of the State's impaired driving crash problem.

To participate, agencies must submit *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* activity reports online by a specific deadline. Reports are compiled and then separated into two different categories based upon the campaign.



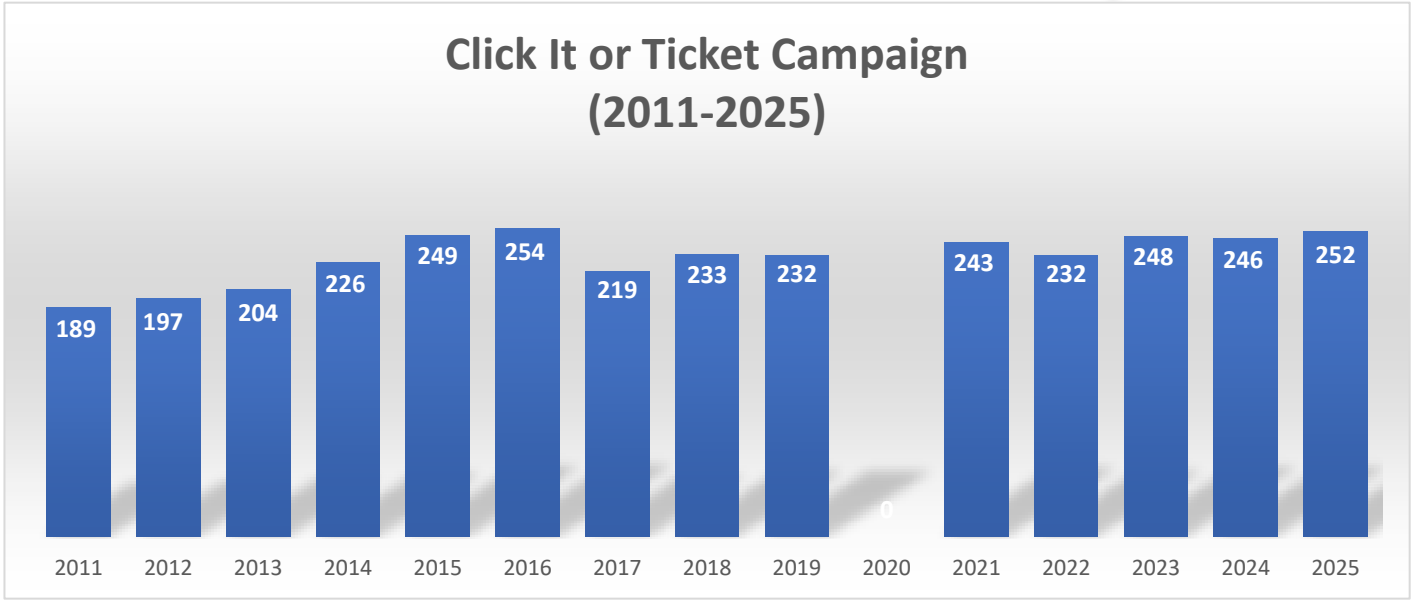


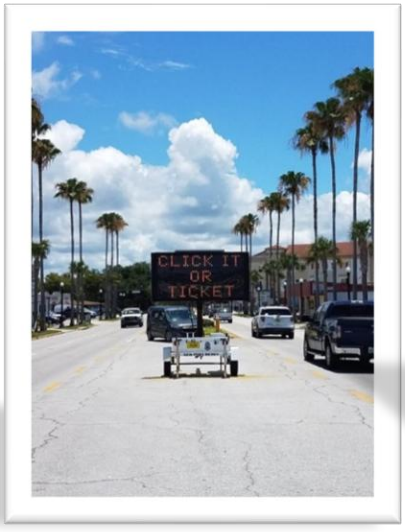
NHTSA *Click It or Ticket* Campaign Wave

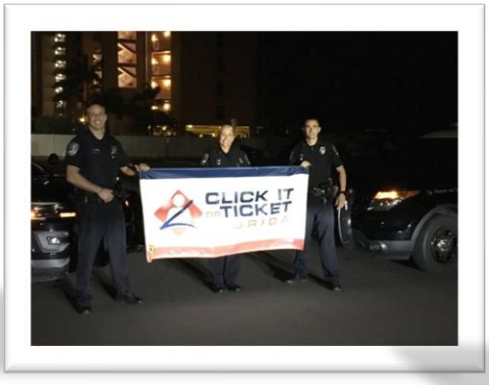
Another condition of the traffic safety federal funding requires Florida to have law enforcement agencies participate in the national Occupant Protection campaign.

To keep Florida's law enforcement agencies actively and enthusiastically involved in occupant restraint enforcement, the Florida LEL Occupant Protection Awareness Program seeks to increase safety belt and child restraint high visibility enforcement by providing printed educational materials, such as banners and yard signs, while providing recognition to the model's most important component: law enforcement.

Law enforcement agencies across Florida will be encouraged to conduct high visibility enforcement operations during the campaign wave and submit activity reports online by a specific deadline.





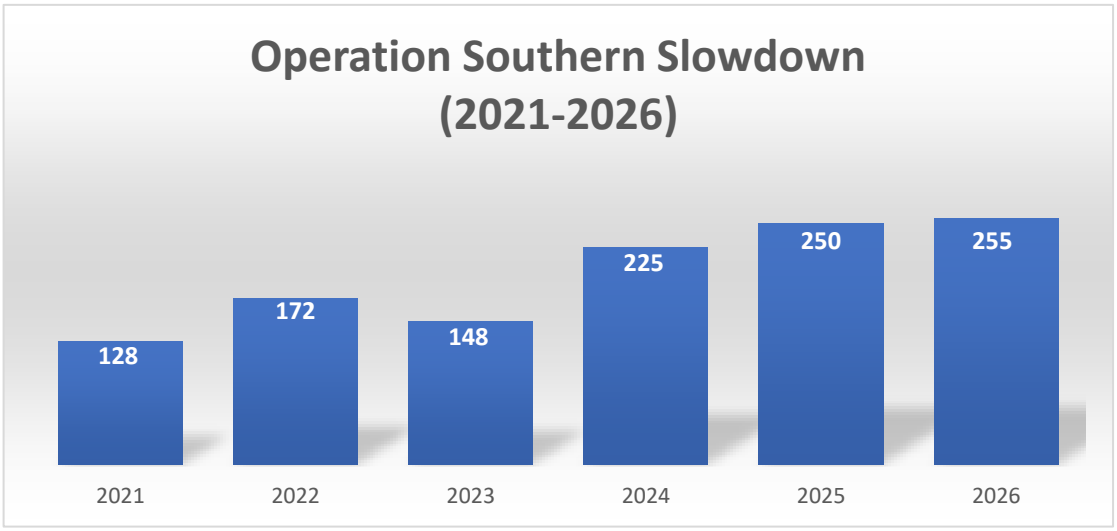


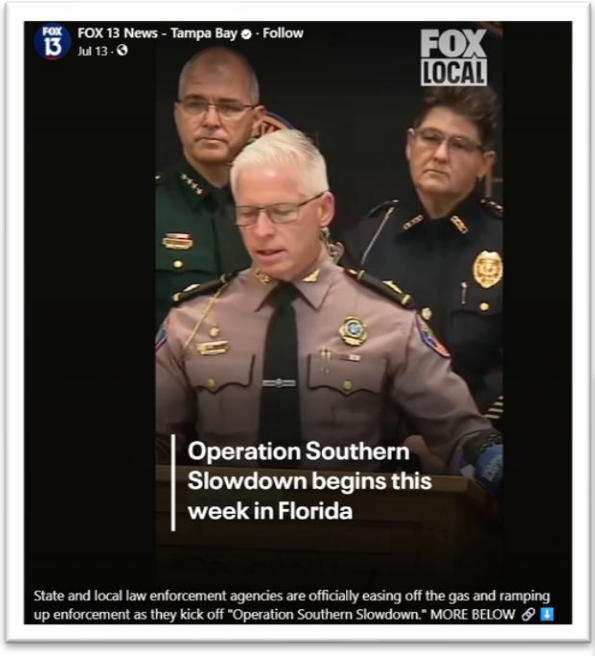


Operation Southern Slow Down Campaign

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration requested the states within NHTSA Region IV actively participate in the traffic safety campaign called *Operation Southern Shield*. During the month of July, Florida joins Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee in a week-long speed enforcement campaign.

State and local law enforcement agencies in all five states conduct the week-long speed enforcement campaign focused on detecting and citing drivers for ignoring the posted speed limits, with the overall aim of illuminating and reducing the prevalence of this risky behavior. Press events are also held at State Welcome Centers with neighboring states to help spread the message and reduce speed-related crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities on our interstates, major highways and local roads.







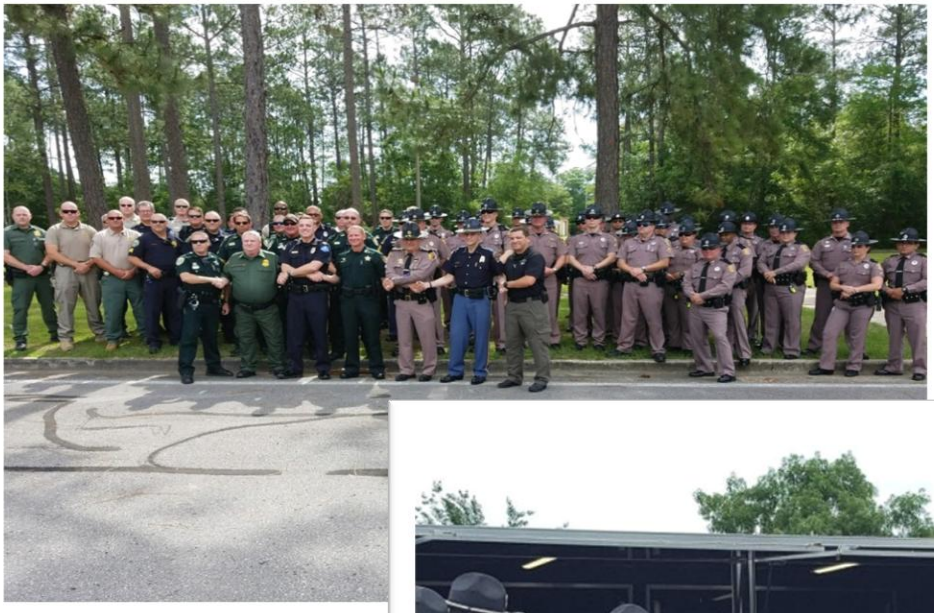


Hands Across the Border Campaign

With the increase in summer holiday travel comes an unfortunate increase in crashes on Florida's highways and roadways. Impaired driving, aggressive driving, distracted driving, and the failure of drivers and passengers to wear their seatbelts results in an increase in serious injuries and fatalities on Florida roadways.

The annual *Hands Across the Border* event started in 1991 as an effort to combat impaired driving. During the annual *Hands Across the Border* event, law enforcement from Florida teamed up with Georgia and Alabama law enforcement agencies to conduct roadside sobriety checkpoints and show a common solidarity and goal of helping to decrease the number of fatalities and injuries on our roadways.

For six days leading up to the Labor Day weekend, the Florida Highway Patrol and local law enforcement agencies join their partners in bordering states, forming a major zero-tolerance impaired driving enforcement effort across the Southeast. Troopers, police, and sheriffs' deputies from Florida, Georgia, and Alabama converged in areas near the state lines to show their common goal to save lives. These events are signified by the iconic handshake of the different law enforcement agencies' command staff, reaffirming their commitment to this campaign.





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