

IT'S ONLY A WHITE LINE

Preventing deaths of stranded motorists and pedestrians on freeways within Houston TranStar's multi-county region

Drivers take life-threatening chances on highways every day. When motorists stop on a freeway and get out of their vehicles, only a thin white line of paint separates them from fast-moving traffic. This action puts lives at risk for serious injury or death. Educating motorists on the danger of leaving their cars and how to get help after experiencing car trouble saves lives.

What is *It's Only a White Line*?

It's Only a White Line is a public education effort of Houston TranStar, the Southeast Texas region's leading transportation management center. With more than five million vehicles in its service area, TranStar has a strong commitment to motorist safety. *It's Only a White Line* was established to prevent deaths of stranded motorists and pedestrians from secondary crashes.

Who is Involved?

TranStar formed the *It's Only a White Line* leadership council to establish a unique collaboration among law enforcement, the medical community, transportation management, the towing industry, and the auto insurance association. The council's cross-section of experts plays an active role in contributing valuable perspectives and knowledge as well as measuring the impact of these preventable tragedies.

It's Only a White Line Wants Motorists to Know

- Every month, about 1,400 crashes and more than 7,000 stalls occur in Houston TranStar's service area.
- In Harris County, incidents involving stranded motorists result in approximately two pedestrian freeway deaths each month and two injuries requiring Level 1 trauma care. Over a 10-year period, about 75 percent of stranded motorists who died in Harris County were standing outside their vehicles.
- For every minute a motorist is stopped on a freeway, the risk of being seriously injured or killed increases dramatically, and the chance of a secondary crash increases by nearly three percent. Whenever possible, driving a vehicle off the freeway before making repairs can save lives. The Texas *Steer It Clear It* law requires that a vehicle be moved when no one is injured and the vehicle is drivable.
- If stranded, motorists should remain in their vehicles and call for help, staying buckled, turning on hazard lights, and moving seats back as far as possible. TranStar's free mobile app makes it easy to call for no-cost [Tow and Go™](#) service.
- First responders, including tow operators, are also at risk each time they respond to roadside calls for help. In fact, motor vehicle crashes account for 65 percent of all deaths in the towing industry. For the safety of all travelers, the Texas *Move Over or Slow Down* law requires drivers to move over a lane or slow to 20 mph below the posted speed when approaching a stopped first responder or tow truck.

Motorists help save lives by staying alert, maintaining their vehicles to prevent breakdowns, and getting cleared off the freeway quickly if stranded.