

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Houston TranStar Cautions Motorists: When Stranded, Stay in Your Car

A flat on the freeway, icy overpasses, extreme temperatures that overheat your engine, or a fender bender that causes you to pull to the side of the road: Possibilities for unexpected roadway incidents are as many as parts of a car. However, if you find yourself stranded on Houston-area roadways, you can plan to stay safe.

“It’s critical for motorists to understand that when stranded, the safest place to be is in your vehicle,” said Dinah Massie, Interim Executive Director at Houston TranStar. “Motorists don’t always have control over circumstances, and when drivers travel several miles to and from work each day, it’s even more likely they will experience an unexpected problem and become stranded on the freeway.”

January’s hazardous driving conditions on icy streets caused hundreds of traffic incidents. One driver lost his life when he exited his damaged vehicle and was hit by another car whose driver had lost control on the slick pavement.

Whether to change a tire, make a repair, or just wait for help, it is dangerous to leave the protection of your vehicle, especially on the freeway. Last year, more than 30,000 stalled or disabled vehicles required roadside assistance on area freeways. According to a study of the Harris County Institute of Forensic Science, 74 percent of deaths that occurred to stranded motorists happened while they were outside their vehicles.

TranStar offers the following tips for staying safe if your vehicle is disabled:

- Stay buckled in your vehicle
- Turn on your vehicle’s flashing hazard lights
- Pull as far off the road as possible, preferably exit the freeway entirely
- Call 713-881-3333 for help
- If someone is injured, always call 911

Houston TranStar encourages motorists to be prepared by maintaining their vehicles with properly inflated tires, slowing down and leaving extra following distance in slippery conditions, and using more caution on bridges, ramps and overpasses. “In extreme weather, if you don’t have to go out, TranStar

encourages drivers to stay home, because even if you have experience driving in such conditions, many others may not,” added Massie.

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If you must travel in inclement weather, the TranStar traffic map offers reliable, real-time travel information, including roadway closures, construction, and incidents such as stalls and high water. Located on its website, the TranStar map includes a weather overlay that shows storm motion, intensity and direction to help motorists better plan travel.

For roadway conditions and more information about how to *Travel Smart with TranStar*, visit www.HoustonTranstar.org.

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Houston TranStar is a unique partnership of representatives from the City of Houston, Harris County, the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) who share resources and exchange information under one roof to provide transportation management and emergency management to help keep motorists informed, roadways clear and lives safe in the fourth most populated city in the United States.