



**Los Angeles County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies
Kenneth Hahn Call Box System**

One Gateway Plaza Los Angeles, California 90012-2952
TEL (213) 922-5652 FAX (213) 922-2955

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**SAFE BOARD
JUNE 28, 2007**

SUBJECT: KENNETH HAHN CALL BOX SYSTEM RESTRUCTURING

ACTION: AUTHORIZE RESTRUCTURING OF THE CALL BOX SYSTEM

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the restructuring of the call box system to provide more effective and efficient services that reflect the changing role of the system from a primary motorist aid resource to a secondary safety net.

RATIONALE

The Los Angeles County Kenneth Hahn Call Box System is currently comprised of over 4,500 call boxes throughout Los Angeles County. The current call box system has been in place since the year 2000, and during that time usage of the system has decreased from an average of 20,000 calls per month to the current average of 5,000 calls per month. While still a valued service, it is evident that motorists are increasingly seeking alternative means to obtain aid on Los Angeles County roadways. During this same period, SAFE has diligently worked to provide new or enhanced motorist services to better meet the needs of today's motorist. SAFE recently introduced the "Mobile Call Box" service (#399). This service allows motorists to use their wireless phone, instead of a call box, to request non-emergency roadside assistance. SAFE has also worked closely with Metro to develop and fund the recent expansion of the Metro Freeway Service Patrol and the I-710 Big Rig Demonstration Project. SAFE is responsible for and will soon develop and operate the new regional advanced traveler information system (511), targeted for deployment during calendar year 2008. This service will provide motorists with comprehensive travel information, including real-time traffic conditions.

The reduction in the use of the call box system and the introduction of new services operated or funded by SAFE, coupled with the availability of other resources and technological improvements, has contributed to an overall shift in the role of the call box system as a primary motorist aid resource to a secondary safety net for motorists. The restructuring of the call box system will enable SAFE to properly manage the system to more efficiently meet the needs of Los Angeles County motorists while maintaining the overall effectiveness of the system. The restructuring is also in line with actions taken by other SAFEs within California. The San Francisco Bay Area, Orange County and San Diego County SAFEs have all

restructured their respective call box systems, with no detrimental impact, to more efficiently meet current public needs.

BACKGROUND

SAFE completed an evaluation to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the call box system relative to the current utilization by the motoring public. A systematic unbiased review of the call box system was developed by Meyer, Mohaddes Associates to identify trends in the current call box system that would assist SAFE in determining an optimal call box site placement and system size. The evaluation recommended the following:

- SAFE should restructure the distance between each call box to approximately ½ mile on urban freeways and maintain current spacing of approximately ½ mile or more on rural freeways.
- SAFE should maintain current call box spacing on and around freeway transitions of approximately ¼ mile or more.

The overall impact of the recommendations would be to restructure the system to ½ mile spacing, versus the current ¼ mile spacing, with the exception of call box sites on transitions and/or sites that pose safety and/or operational issues. This would in effect decrease the number of call box sites in the system from over 4,500 to a range of approximately 2,000 to 2,500 call box sites.

In addition, SAFE will continue to monitor the call box system and take appropriate steps to further restructure the system to effectively and efficiently meet future needs and requirements.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

SAFE estimates a 5 - 6% reduction in the cost to operate the call box system in FY 08. The reductions are reflected in the proposed FY 08 budget under cost center 3351, project 300209, and account 50320. In the future, it is estimated that a 10% reduction in costs may be achieved once the restructuring is completed. The proposed FY08 budget contains \$200,000 to implement the restructuring plan. Future or unanticipated restructuring costs shall be included in future budget requests.

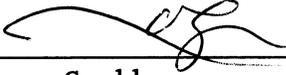
ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may choose to either A) not authorize the restructuring of the call box system or B) modify the restructuring of the call box system. Neither of these alternatives is recommended. The restructuring of the call box system is proposed to better reflect the current use of the system by the motoring public. To maintain the current system would not be efficient nor would it provide a more effective service to the public. A modification of the restructuring is also not recommended as the call box system is still an effective and viable system.

Prepared by: Kali Fogel, Motorist Services Technical Administrator



Michael Greenwood
Deputy Executive Officer, Operations



Roger Snoble
Executive Officer, SAFE

