Frequently Asked Questions

What is the San Diego Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) program?

The San Diego FSP includes 25 tow trucks and 9 service pickup trucks that patrol approximately 242 miles of freeway in San Diego County. The program helps improve traffic flow and minimize potential delays by assisting stranded motorists and/or removing disabled vehicles from the freeway in a timely manner.

When is the San Diego FSP on duty?

The FSP operates Monday through Friday from 5:30 to 9:30 a.m.; 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and 3 to 7 p.m. FSP also is available on weekends along key corridors from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., excluding holidays. View the service area map at 511sd.com/FSP.

How can the FSP assist me?

If you become stranded on the freeway, the FSP can:

• Provide a gallon of gas if your car runs out of fuel
• Change a flat tire
• Jump start your engine if you have a dead battery
• Refill your radiator with water

If the Freeway Service Patrol cannot get your vehicle running in a few minutes, it will be towed, at no charge, to a safe location off the freeway designated by the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

What should I do if my car breaks down on the freeway?

First, make sure that you and your vehicle are in a safe location, such as on the shoulder of the freeway. You may call for motorist assistance from any roadside call box, or call 511 from a mobile phone and say “Roadside Assistance.” When the FSP is not on duty, you will be connected with a call center to reach other roadside assistance operators.

How do I recognize the San Diego FSP?

Look for the FSP logo on the doors of our service vehicles. As a statewide program, all FSP vehicles throughout California have similar logos. FSP drivers wear blue uniforms and brightly colored FSP safety vests.

Can the FSP driver tow my vehicle to my home, workplace, or to a repair facility?

No. The FSP drivers are only allowed to tow your vehicle to the closest location off the freeway, as designated by the CHP. FSP drivers are not permitted to recommend service companies or repair facilities.
Are the FSP drivers certified?

Yes. FSP drivers must complete a CHP training program to receive their certification to provide roadside assistance services. Each driver must attend quarterly safety trainings to maintain his or her FSP certification.

Can I pay or tip the FSP driver?

No. FSP drivers are not allowed to accept gifts or compensation for their services. However, you can support your driver and assist the FSP program by completing the customer survey card provided by your driver. The postage is pre-paid so you can fill out your survey and drop it in the mail to SANDAG. Or complete our survey online at sandag.org/FSPSurvey to let us know about your experience.

Why is there a Freeway Service Patrol?

The California FSP program was established in March 1993 with the passage of the Freeway Service Patrol Act. Along with other metropolitan areas in the state, the San Diego FSP operated as a pilot program until 2000, when state legislation was passed establishing the ongoing FSP program as part of the annual state budget.

The FSP program plays an important role in achieving the SANDAG objective to better manage the regional freeway system, and thereby make better use of our existing transportation resources. By quickly responding to vehicle breakdowns and other incidents, the FSP can help reduce delays on congested freeway corridors during commute hours.

How is the FSP funded?

State funding for the FSP is provided by Caltrans. The $25 million annual budget is divided among 23 counties with FSP programs based on population, freeway miles, and freeway delay. The San Diego FSP program receives approximately $2.4 million per year from Caltrans, with an additional $600,000 in matching funds provided by SANDAG.

Who is responsible for operating the FSP?

SANDAG is the local FSP agency responsible for contracting with tow service operators, consultants, and other contractors required to operate the FSP Program in San Diego County. SANDAG also prepares budgets and annual reports, and coordinates with the other program partners on service changes and expansions.

Caltrans is responsible for administering state FSP funding and providing statewide guidance, planning and program coordination. The Caltrans District 11 (San Diego) office is responsible for local invoicing of FSP funds, monitoring of San Diego FSP performance, and coordinating of temporary FSP service for freeway construction projects.

CHP Border Division (San Diego) is responsible for training, supervising and dispatching the tow service operators as part of the daily FSP field operations in San Diego County.

FSP service is contracted through Coastal Pride Towing and Road One Towing.

For more information, visit 511sd.com/FSP