



## Metro News Pressroom

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### **New Non-emergency #399 Roadside Assistance Cell Phone Number for Los Angeles County Freeway Motorists Starts July 1**

Beginning tomorrow, July 1, Metro and the Los Angeles County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (LA SAFE) will begin operating a new non-emergency cell phone number that motorists can use for roadside assistance on Los Angeles County freeways.

The new number, #399, allows motorists traveling along the freeway system in Los Angeles County only to use their cell phone to summons roadside assistance from their Auto Club or from the Metro Freeway Service Patrol.

Motorists, using their cell phone, simply dial #399 and they will be connected to a live operator who will assist them in obtaining the appropriate service in response to their call.

"With the influx of cell phone technology, this makes perfect sense in expanding the freeway call box program to allow motorists here in LA County to use their own cell phones to summons non-emergency roadside assistance," said Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board Chairman Frank Roberts.

LA SAFE will implement the new program effective tomorrow, July 1. It is anticipated that the introduction of the #399 number will reduce the burden on the 9-1-1- emergency system by providing motorists with a viable option to call when in need of non-emergency roadside assistance. Examples may include running out of gas, flat tire or mechanical malfunction of a vehicle out of the freeway travel lanes.

The new cell phone #399 number does not replace the 9-1-1 emergency number. Motorists should continue to use 9-1-1 when requesting medical, fire or law enforcement response or reporting a hazard on a freeway travel lane.

"This is a great tool in our effort to reduce traffic congestion on our freeways," said Los Angeles Mayor-elect Antonio Villaraigosa. "It will benefit the motorist looking for immediate assistance and also will help all Los Angeles County residents and the California Highway Patrol by providing a reliable and easy alternative for motorists to call when they need help."

It is estimated that an average of 10,000 calls per month for the first year will be received from motorists using the #399 number. There will be no charge to the caller by LA SAFE to answer and handle the call, however, the caller may be assessed minute charges by their carrier against their current plan.

"The introduction of this new non-emergency cell phone number comes at

a great time as we plan to expand the successful Metro Freeway Service Patrol program on Southland freeways," said Metro CEO Roger Snoble.

Effective July 1 the Metro Freeway Service Patrol will expand selected weekday and weekend service in existing patrol areas providing service from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on the weekends. The number of Metro Freeway Service Patrol tow trucks will increase from 33 to 44 in midday during the week and from 28 to 42 on the weekends.

Funding for the new #399 non-emergency cell phone number is provided by LA SAFE, which obtains its revenues from an annual \$1 vehicle registration surcharge assessed to each vehicle registered in Los Angeles County. Cost of the program is estimated at \$1 million a year.

LA SAFE was created in 1988, pursuant to California Streets and Highway Code Section 2550 et.seq. and is responsible for providing motorist aid services in Los Angeles County.

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