

massDOT

Massachusetts Department of Transportation

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

MASSDOT HIGHWAY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SPONSORSHIP



TravelersMarketing

A Partnership in Safety

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) stated mission is to: "deliver excellent customer service to people traveling in the Commonwealth by providing transportation infrastructure which is safe, reliable, robust and resilient. We work to provide a transportation system which can strengthen the state's economy and improve the quality of life for all." The MassDOT Highway Assistance Program is a perfect manifestation of this goal and is supported through sponsorship by MAPFRE Insurance, the largest private passenger automobile, homeowners' and commercial automobile insurer in Massachusetts. Whether it's being on-scene during routine traffic breakdowns, assisting at major highway crashes, or showing up on the front lines during the pandemic, the Highway Assistance Program brings MassDOT's mission to life.



Highway Assistance Patrol vehicle on scene at highway crash.

From seasonal blizzards to a life altering pandemic, the Highway Assistance Program helps communities prepare for, respond to, and rebuild after extreme events. The Highway Assistance Program has been part of Massachusetts' first line of preparation and response during extreme weather events, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. The Highway Assistance Program coordinates with other first responders to clear highways and help people reach their destinations safely. Over the past year in particular, the Highway Assistance Program continued to deliver critical assistance to nervous and stranded motorists who were facing extraordinary stress as they traveled to and from work and school, medical appointments and other daily business.

“Great program. Was in the middle of trying to reach AAA, when Mass DOT pulled over to help me with a flat tire. Thank you, MassDOT!”

HAP Driver: Danny J. | Date of Assist: 1/30/20

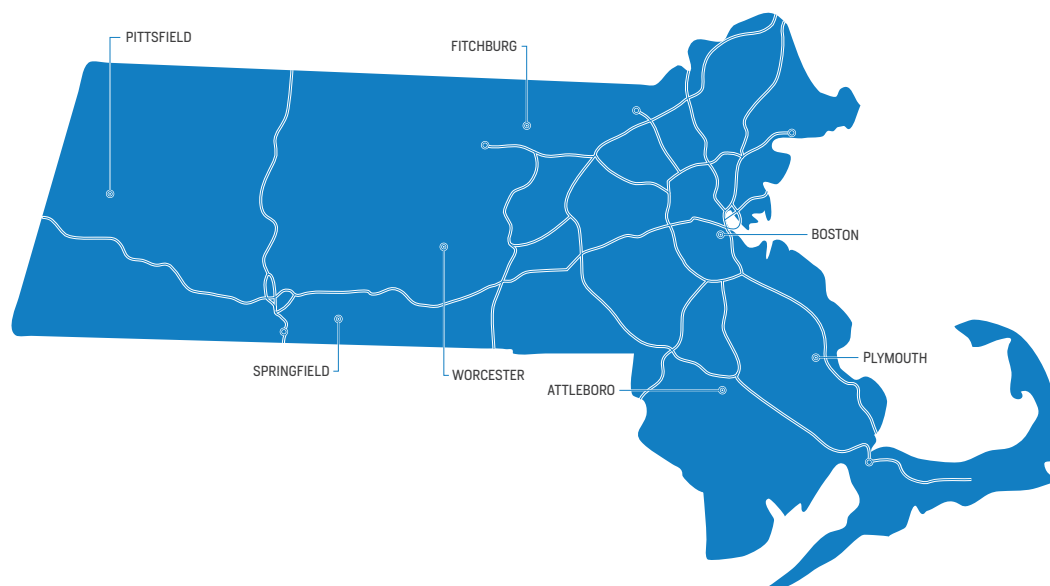
Since the 2003 inception of this purposeful program, the patrol has driven more than 25.3 million miles and responded to over 618,000 incidents. The MassDOT Highway Assistance Program exemplifies the goals of the DOT and the sponsor to improve highway safety day-in and day-out. In 2020, 57 highly visible MAPFRE-sponsored vehicles traveled 1.3 million miles across the state, offering assistance to people in need. Highway Assistance Program operators responded to over 40,000 highway incidents, rendering assistance to almost 50,000 motorists and their passengers. Motorists are reminded and informed of the service by 70 prominent, shoulder-mounted highway signs.

2020 PATROL METRICS

INCIDENTS CLEARED
40,374

MOTORISTS ASSISTED
49,979

MILES PATROLLED
1,340,016



2020 in the Rearview Mirror

In 2020, the term “unprecedented” was in overdrive—summing up a year when Massachusetts residents, along with all Americans and the worldwide population, were met with glaring uncertainty. Through it all, the MassDOT Highway Assistance Program sponsored by MAPFRE stood as a testament to integrity, illustrating an unwavering commitment to service even when faced with the most daunting of situations.



MassDOT enacted a “COVID-19 Virus Protocol” to ensure the safety of patrol operators and assisted motorists. The protocol defined standards for personal hygiene and safety for patrol drivers, in addition to guidelines for approaching assisted motorists and transporting motorists only when absolutely necessary. Wearing masks and gloves when speaking with an assisted motorist became mandatory, and patrol drivers required motorists to wear a mask in patrol vehicles.

MassDOT COVID-19 safety practices also called for patrol drivers to use a white board to communicate with motorists without rolling down their windows, maintaining customer service and communication with no physical contact. Unfortunately, Coronavirus safety protocols also necessitated a temporary stoppage of using digital survey tablets or distributing printed handout cards. Handout practices resumed in July.

“Danny pulled over behind me, approached my car with his mask on and tapped on my rear passenger window offering assistance. I am disabled and got a flat tire at a dangerous spot on the highway coming home from dropping off my wife at work. Danny was very friendly and very, very helpful...Loved the social distancing safety! THANK YOU.”

HAP Driver: Danny J. | Date of Assist: 7/20/20

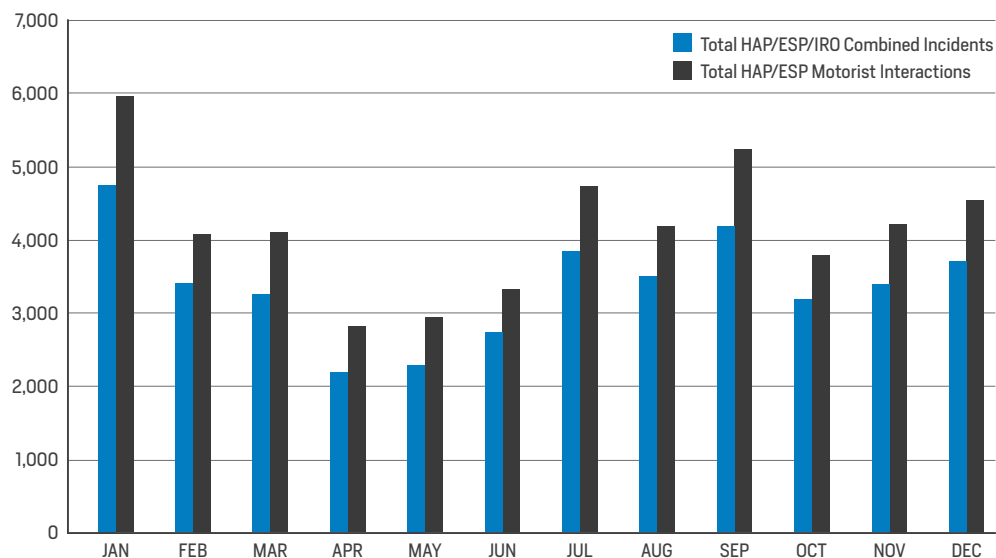
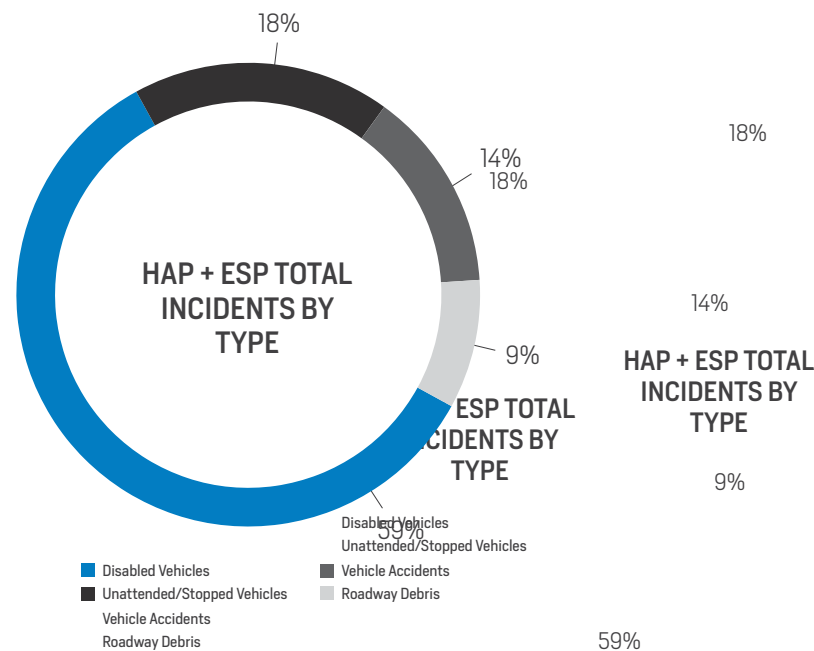
MassDOT management and patrol operators were invited to join the Travelers Marketing-managed SafeHighways.org Idea Sharing Network video conferences in May and June 2020, in which Safety Service Patrols (like the Highway Assistance Program) from across the country shared best practices in responding to and adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 100 participants joined, and as a community, helped each other with their stories, plans and recommendations.

MAPFRE also recognized the extraordinary situation its policyholders faced, providing the Staying Home Refund program geared to provide credits to compensate those who stayed off the roads at home in order allow first responders, like Highway Assistance Program operators, space to do their critical work. “We understand that our policyholders are facing a number of challenges, as we all focus on the health and safety of our loved ones,” said MAPFRE USA President & CEO Alfredo Castelo.

Program Metrics

MassDOT Highway Assistance Program patrol operators log over a million miles annually. Operators scan covered patrol routes, assist motorists, and keep the Commonwealth's Interstates, major highways, and Turnpike safe. They perform a variety of services, including changing flat tires, fixing minor mechanical problems, removing roadway debris, providing small amounts of fuel, and offering emergency medical assistance. Patrol operators have even assisted during extraordinary situations, such as "Silver Alerts" and medical emergencies requiring operators to perform CPR in the line of duty. Combined, the Highway Assistance Program helps tens of thousands of people annually.

The Highway Assistance Program cleared fewer incidents in 2020 due to stay-at-home mandates and the increase in remote working and schooling. Yet, impressively, the Highway Assistance Patrol cleared 14,961 incidents, the MassPike ESP cleared 20,755 incidents and the Boston IRO cleared 4,658 incidents for a combined total of 40,374 incidents cleared. This represents about 70% of prior years' total incidents. Year-over-year, the most common type of incident to which the program responds are "disabled vehicles" (flat tires, dead batteries, and empty fuel tanks) accounting for 59% of the program's total incidents* last year.

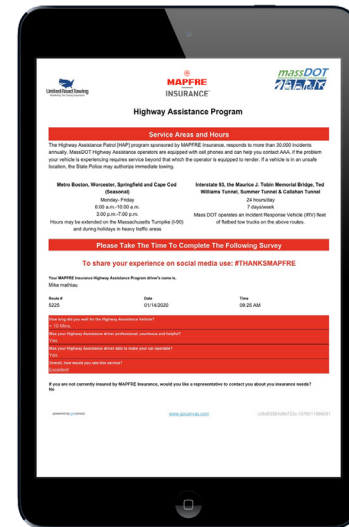


*MassDOT does not provide incident types for IRO; HAP/ ESP totals reflected.

Assisted Motorist Reviews

The Highway Assistance Program served on the front lines as essential workers during the pandemic, even when state government encouraged residents to stay at home and reduce travel. Though the work never stopped, the MassDOT COVID-19 safety protocol dictated that patrol operators refrain from handing out tablets and comment cards from mid-March to mid-July. Consequently, there was an overall year-over-year reduction in survey returns.

Even still, the MassDOT HAP program receives more customer feedback surveys annually than other sponsored patrols nationwide. The heightened number of surveys received may be attributed to the use of tablets to complete surveys on-site and the complementary, continued use of mail-in cards.



Motorists are extremely grateful for the assistance provided as evidenced in the more than 1,500 surveys received in 2020. Motorists consistently rated the service as “Excellent.”

1,541

Motorist
Reviews

520

Motorist Reviews
Including Comment

“My name is Bill. I’m 75 years old. I drive a pickup truck and couldn’t even find where the spare tire was. I must have been there for a half hour. Fernando came along, pulled over and helped me. He had it done within 10 minutes. We found out that my spare tire had no air and he said to me, ‘Don’t worry, I’ll take care of you.’ Fernando, you are my hero for the rest of my life. Thank you so much for keeping me safe and doing the job that you do out there. It is very dangerous with cars flying by at 70 to 80 mph. Fernando said, ‘Don’t worry, we’re going to be okay. I’m on scene, we’re going to be all set.’ He also told me to have a nice weekend. Fernando, you do a great job out there and you help a lot of people. Thank you so much.”

HAP Driver: Fernando S. | Date of Assist: 8/7/20


Positive Public Perception

Activation of the sponsorship extends brand messaging and connects people with assisted motorists' unique roadside experiences. Customers who receive assistance, or witness the Highway Assistance Program coming to the aid of other motorists, remember and share their experiences during video conference calls, on walks with friends, at the family dinner table and beyond.


"Thank you so much MAPFRE and MassDOT! Broken down in a bad spot on I-95 N in Westwood. Mike towed me off the highway to a safe place."

HAP Driver: Mike B. | Date of Assist: 7/22/20

The Highway Assistance Program is regularly featured in the news and online. Whether it be a busy travel weekend, a major snowstorm, or a construction project, MassDOT and the media inform the public that the Highway Assistance Program is on the scene. In 2020, there were a total of 74 online articles, print articles and social media posts about the Highway Assistance Program.

**Myla K Chadwick**
July 10, 2020 · 🌐

MAPFRE Insurance - Who knew there was an insurance sponsored Highway Assistance Program (HAP)??? We're looking forward to working with you as your newest clients!
From a very grateful Mom, THANK YOU!!



0:32 / 5:24

Community Champions Network was live.
July 10, 2020 · 🌐

👍❤️😮 36 20 Comments 1 Share


To watch this video, please click the linked image above.

In addition, 2020 saw the continuation of popular monthly MassDOT Blogs authored by MAPFRE. The roadway safety-related blog posts averaged 2,000 readers each, and delivered on the state and sponsor's pledge to do well in the community. Blog post topics included Child Passenger Safety, Buckling Up for Safety, Advice for Dangerous Winter Ice, and more. The blogs are promoted on MassDOT's social media pages, capturing more attention for the sponsored patrol and facilitating sharing and online discussion.

Additional, non-blog related social posts were provided by Travelers Marketing to MassDOT throughout the year. The posts were rotated on MassDOT's Twitter, Facebook and Instagram pages and featured the hashtag #thanksMAPFRE, which also appears on DOT highway patrol vans and comment cards. Assisted motorists are also encouraged to use this hashtag when sharing their gratitude for being helped by MassDOT and MAPFRE on social media.

Export Towing
about 12 months ago

In these difficult times we want to thank each and every one of our HAP Operators patrolling the highways across the State. As towing companies have been forced to reduce staff and or hours your efforts to help maintain a safe and fast environment for people to get assistance do not go unnoticed. We have received several thank you's from motorists over the past few weeks. You truly are warriors. Stay safe and stay focused. Although traffic is down speed is up! And most of all Thank You!



North Attleboro Police Department
about 4 months ago

Captain Joseph DiRenzo presents a North Attleboro Police challenge coin to Danny Gonzalez (left) from Sterry Street Towing (Attleboro, MA), and Aaron Gallucci (right) from MAPFRE Highway Assistance (Medford, MA). Mr. Gonzalez and Mr. Gallucci were recognized for their courageous efforts in assisting police with the apprehension of two suspects involved in two armed robberies in N. Attleboro and numerous robberies in other jurisdictions. Typically, challenge coins are only given to North Attleboro Police Officers who go above and beyond the call of service while performing their duties.

MassDOT
Government Organization · 18,748 Likes · April 1, 2020

"I thought an angel dropped from the sky. I hit a pot hole on 290 going 65 mph and my tire blew. John appeared within minutes to fix it. Thank you!" said Rebecca after being helped by the Highway Assistance Program. Disabled vehicles are the most common incidents attended to by the @MAPFREIns @MassDOT program. <https://www.mass.gov/service-d.../patrol-hours-and-information> #MATraffic #thanksMAPFRE



Mass. Transportation @MassDOT · Jan 26, 2020

#MATraffic: When crashes happen, @MAPFREIns supported @MassDOT Highway Assistance Patrol helps clear roadway debris & assist with incident response. **#thanksMAPFRE**

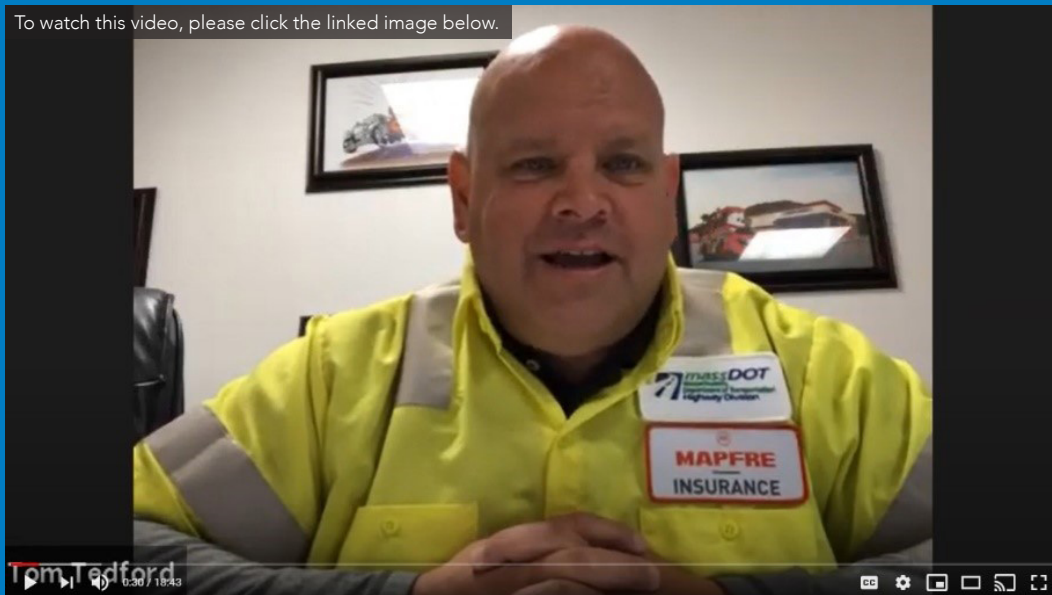
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Spotlight On

One of the 2020 blogs, titled “MassDOT, MAPFRE Insurance Value Highway Assistance Program Patrol Operators During Coronavirus Pandemic,” featured content taken from a live video-interview between Travelers Marketing Vice President of Sponsorship Sam McClain and Senior Vice President of Export Towing Tom Tedford. Export Towing is the program operator for the Highway Assistance Patrol fleet (covering major DOT highways).



In the interview, Tom explained the changes that the patrol operators made during the pandemic. He also shared that, while roads all over Massachusetts saw temporary decreases in traffic, there was a severe increase in speeds by those motorists on the road, which led to an increase in speed-related crashes.

Tom stressed the importance of slowing down and moving over when motorists see patrol operators on the side of the roadways. He also expressed his gratitude for the patrol drivers' dedication and hard work. Tom stated, “I just want to issue a huge thank you to our employees and our operators, as well as MAPFRE and MassDOT for continuing to work through this pandemic in this program. It's unprecedented times. We realize that and truly they have all acted like true first responders.”

Sponsorship Program Management

Travelers Marketing works to manage the sponsorship placements and activations and acts as a liaison between the DOT and the sponsor. Travelers Marketing also consistently communicates with MassDOT to identify opportunities for further sponsorship integration and alignment between MassDOT and MAPFRE.



Team members attend MassDOT Highway Assistance Program management meetings. Travelers Marketing's participation at these meetings provides a two-way exchange of up-to-date information on both operational and sponsorship matters. For example, in 2020, in an effort to ensure the safety of patrol drivers (and the traveling public), Travelers Marketing worked with Export Towing (the patrol operator) and MassDOT to include sponsor recognition on new facemasks worn by patrol drivers. The facemasks were partially funded by MAPFRE so that all fleets received an allocation of masks.

A Look Ahead to 2021 & Beyond

As the past year has shown, no matter the external factors and extraordinary circumstances, the MassDOT Highway Assistance Program sponsored by MAPFRE Insurance remains a constant presence, helping motorists in their time of need.

Some exciting new collaborations are already underway in 2021:

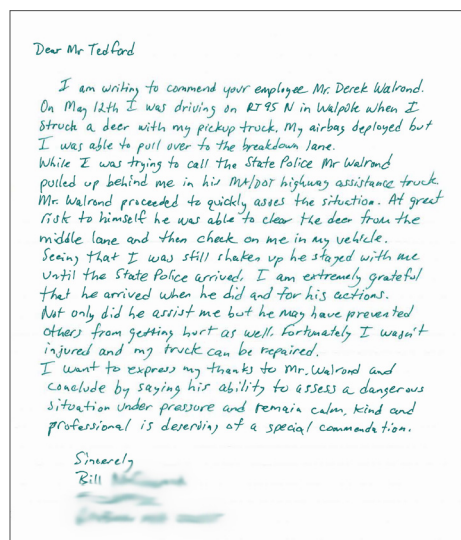
“Look Both Ways” Public Service Campaign

- Travelers Marketing helped coordinate meetings amongst Fundación MAPFRE and the MassDOT Communication team, as well as the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, to partner on the Foundation’s “Look Both Ways” public service campaign. “Look Both Ways” is aimed at advancing Vision Zero, the global initiative to eliminate fatal and serious traffic crashes in Boston by 2030.
- Travelers Marketing gained approval from Export Towing to include a “Look Both Ways” PSA graphic on the digital tablet survey handed to motorists at the time of assist (when appropriate).

Summer Media Pitch

- Travelers Marketing is also working with MAPFRE’s Corporate Communications team to develop a summer media pitch supported by the Highway Assistance Program’s roadside assistance data.

In 2021 and beyond, Massachusetts residents will benefit from added safety on the highways and are informed and reminded about the service, and the added sponsorship support, through the highly visible patrol vehicles and branded highway signs. Through social engagement, MAPFRE and MassDOT will continue to raise awareness about the great work performed by the dedicated Highway Assistance Program operators and share widely stories from grateful assisted motorists. Radio promotions, guest blogs, social posts and patrol mentions in news advisories via MassDOT advisories, website and social pages will shine even more positive light on the Highway Assistance Program.



A statement from a poignant, hand-written thank you letter penned by a motorist assisted by the Highway Assistance Program speaks to the vital importance of the program: “I am extremely grateful that he arrived when he did and for his actions...his ability to assess a dangerous situation under pressure and remain calm, kind and professional is deserving of a special commendation.” #thanksMAPFRE