

# ADDITIONALLY SELECTED TECHNOLOGIES 2009

## Emergency Contact Locator (ECON)

### It Only Takes a Minute

On December 7, 2005, the life of Christine Olson was changed forever. Christine's daughter Tiffany Olson was involved in a traffic crash on U.S. 19 in Manatee County, Florida. Tiffany received fatal injuries when the motorcycle she was a passenger on collided with another vehicle.

Ms. Olson was not notified of Tiffany's passing for several hours and was not able to say her last goodbyes. Ms. Olson was heartbroken. She then created a silver lining to an otherwise dark cloud. Ms. Olson, with the assistance of State Representative Bill Galvano, began pushing for emergency information to be added to a person's driver's license or identification card.



*The scene around a traffic crash can be chaotic with emergency first responders setting up perimeters while assessing the situation. The ability for emergency personnel to quickly get accurate information about the victim is of utmost importance.*

Since emergency information could not be printed directly on a license, Ms. Olson and Rep. Galvano contacted the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) and took the next best route: to have the information included in the driver and vehicle information database system, which is a secured database used by most law enforcement agencies in the state of Florida.

The result of their efforts is the Emergency Contact Information (ECI) System, which enables anyone with a valid Florida driver's license to allow emergency contact information to be provided to law enforcement in the event of an emergency. Since the system's implementation in 2006, over 3.3 million Florida residents have provided the necessary information to become included in the database.

In 2008, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Technology Implementation Group (TIG) selected this technology for promotion within the AASHTO community as worthy of nationwide implementation.

*Contrary to popular belief, crash scene emergency responders cannot quickly gain access to data such as the motor vehicle owner emergency contact name(s) and contact phone numbers. Emergency responders instead waste precious moments searching personal belongings for leads to the identity of an emergency contact.*

### ECON in Action

The potential benefits include better victim roadside services and therefore possibly a small reduction in the number of crash fatalities because of expedited availability of medical records for the seriously injured.

Crash scene law enforcement personnel use the ECON system to:

- Assist with unidentified crash victim information,
- Facilitate family member reunification, and
- Expedite next-of-kin notification.

### Contacts:

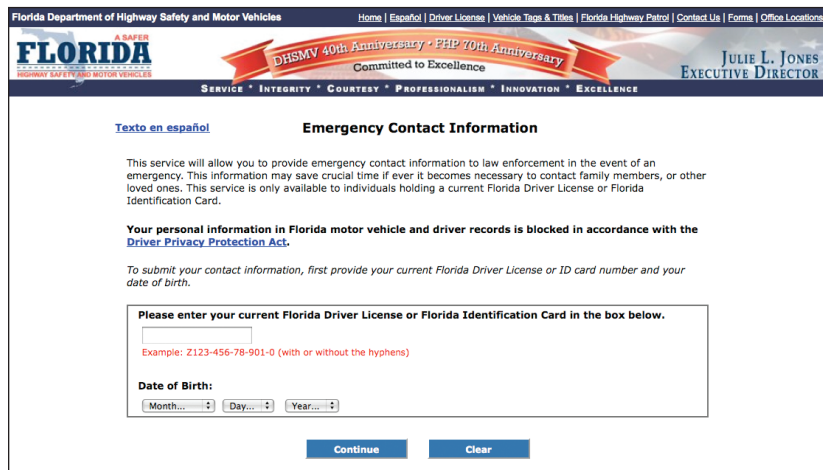
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## Looking toward Nationwide ECON Implementation

Emergency Contact Locator (ECON) Systems, such as Florida's ECI System, provide an organized method of the registration, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of emergency contact information following an emergency roadside incident. The next step is working with the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) to achieve nationwide ECON implementation so that other states can participate and benefit from this worthy, potentially life-saving, technology.

In the near future, NLETS in cooperation with participating automotive manufacturers and automotive insurance partners will create a secure national database linking emergency contact information with a vehicle identification number (VIN#). The VIN# ECON database, which will include emergency contact information voluntarily provided by motor vehicle owners and automobile insurance policy holders, will be used by law enforcement personnel nationwide to access emergency contact information associated with a VIN#. The VIN# ECON database will be linked to state motor vehicle databases and the NLETS network to connect together more than 20,000 law



The screenshot shows the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Español, Driver License, Vehicle Tags & Titles, Florida Highway Patrol, Contact Us, Forms, and Office Locations. The main header features the Florida logo and a banner for the DHSMV 40th Anniversary and FHP 70th Anniversary, with the tagline 'Committed to Excellence'. Below the header, the page title is 'Emergency Contact Information'. The text explains that this service allows users to provide emergency contact information to law enforcement. It includes a section for entering the current Florida Driver License or Florida Identification Card number, with an example: 'Example: Z123-456-78-901-0 (with or without the hyphens)'. There is also a section for entering the Date of Birth, with dropdown menus for Month, Day, and Year. At the bottom of the form, there are 'Continue' and 'Clear' buttons.

The Florida DHSMV website provides a quick, easy way for Florida drivers to enter their emergency contact information into the ECON system database.

enforcement agencies nationwide, and more than 500,000 in-vehicle police mobile data devices in the United States and Canada.

One of the key features of the VIN# ECON is that law enforcement personnel will be able to save precious time by not having to rely on finding identifying documentation, such as a driver's license or identification card, at the crash scene. Rather, they will be able to access emergency contact information within seconds for the registered owner of the vehicle as part of a standard NLETS VIN# query routinely used to obtain vehicle registration information.

*The design of Florida's system is fairly simple, yet very effective. Other states could benefit from the lessons learned in the design and implementation of this system.*

Marianne Trussell,  
Florida DOT

This is an important feature because it is not always possible to find identifying documents due to the type and severity of the crash (e.g., Minnesota bridge collapse).

The story related in the "It Only Takes a Minute" section is courtesy of the Florida Department of Safety and Motor Vehicles.

### Resources:

The following resources are available for people who need additional information on emergency contact registries and proponent organizations.

*Policy Resolution: Standing Committee on Highway Traffic Safety, Safety Management Committee on Highway Traffic Safety, Safety Management Subcommittee, FEDERATED VIN# EMERGENCY CONTACT REGISTRY (ECONA) INITIATIVE, 2008*

*IHE ITI White Paper — Law Enforcement Interoperability with Crash Scene EMS, IHE IT Infrastructure Technical Committee, 2008*

Florida websites for voluntary provision of emergency contact information:

<http://www.flhsmv.gov/>

<http://www.flhsmv.gov/EmerContInfoHistory1.html>

Click on "Continue to website to enter your Emergency Contact Information" to access the ECI page.

Websites for proponent organizations:

<http://www.toinformfamiliesfirst.org/>

<http://www.ParentGrief.com>