



The Interstate 275 Florida Frequently Asked Questions List

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Many of you exploring Interstate275Florida.com have a lot of questions regarding how Interstate 275 came to be in the Tampa/St. Petersburg area among other things. Well, you have come to the right place!

This frequently asked questions list should answer your questions. The questions are in no particular order.

When was Interstate 275 in St. Petersburg built?

Construction on Interstate 275 in St. Petersburg began in the early 1970's starting at a point just south of the Ulmerton Road (SR 688) and M L King Street North interchange (Exit 31). From there the highway was built through St. Petersburg in short one to three mile segments from the early 1970's to 1988 when the last segment of Interstate 275 was connected to the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, which was completed in 1987. Completed in 1983 and 1984 was the segment of Interstate 275 which connected the southern terminus of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge to its junction with Interstate 75 just outside Ellenton. The Sunshine Skyway's approach roads were upgraded to interstate standards in 1989 that included the installation of overpasses over the rest area frontage roads and in 1994 with the replacement of two functionally obsolete drawbridges that were part of the original Sunshine Skyway.

When was Interstate 275 in Tampa built?

Interstate 275 in Tampa was originally constructed as a segment of Interstate 4 from today's "Malfunction Junction" to the Ulmerton Road/M L King Street North interchange complex (Exit 31) in St. Petersburg. The highway incorporated the Howard Frankland Bridge completed in 1960.

At that time Interstate 4 was in two discontinuous segments, with the segment from the Howard Frankland Bridge to east of Malfunction Junction being the missing link. Construction began on that missing link east of the Howard Frankland Bridge in the early 1960's with completion to the Hillsborough River near downtown Tampa in 1962. The Malfunction Junction interchange was completed in 1964 with a stub end that accommodate what would be Interstate 75 three years later.

In the mid-1960's the original Interstate 75 was constructed to the Bearss Avenue interchange (Exit 53) and the highway dead ended just south of that location until Interstate 75 was extended to Interstate 4 in 1967. Once the segment was completed the section of Interstate 4 west of Malfunction Junction was renumbered as Interstate 75 which provided a continuous interstate highway from the Georgia state line to St. Petersburg at Ulmerton Road and M L King Street North (Exit 31).

Was the original Interstate 75 supposed to terminate in Tampa or St. Petersburg?

The original Interstate 75 was supposed to terminate in St. Petersburg, probably in South Pasadena just before the entrance to the Corey Causeway. However, plans were changed when the decision was made to extend Interstate 75 south over the Sunshine Skyway bridge through Bradenton, Sarasota, Fort Myers, Naples and over the Alligator Alley to Ft. Lauderdale and Miami.

Was there a Tampa/St. Petersburg bypass route proposed?

Yes, when the decision was made to extend Interstate 75 to Miami. The route was to be signed Interstate 75E. Today this segment is part of the Interstate 75 mainline to Miami.

I thought a 3-digit interstate number with the first digit even is for routes that bypass cities. Is Interstate 275 in Tampa/St. Petersburg an exception?

Basically the first even digit of a 3-digit interstate route number is reserved for routes that bypass cities. At the time the Interstate 75 extension to Miami was proposed the standards for interstate route numbering have changed and route suffixes such as 75E were no longer allowed to be signed. Additionally, in order to discourage through truck traffic going through the city centers of Tampa and St. Petersburg it was decided to renumber the original section of Interstate 75 from the Hillsborough-Pasco county line southward through Tampa and St. Petersburg as Interstate 275.

The decision to renumber the segment of Interstate 75 as Interstate 275 through the city centers of Tampa and St. Petersburg was made by a United States federal agency called the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), a unit of the United States Department of Transportation. It acts upon the advice of an organization comprised of federal and state transportation officials known as the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO). It is AASHTO that comes up with the interstate route numbering decisions and makes a recommendation to the FHWA for its implementation.

How long is Interstate 275 in Florida from end to end?

Interstate 275 in Florida is 59 miles long. Interstate 275's northern terminus is located on the Hillsborough-Pasco county line just south of the SR 56 interchange, while its southern terminus is located northeast of Ellenton and west of Parrish.

What improvements were made to Interstate 275 since its completion through the Tampa Bay region?

Interstate 275 has received its share of makeovers over the years since it was originally built:

Tampa:

Original 4-lane segment from US 92/Dale Mabry Highway (Exit 41) to FL 60/Memorial Highway/Kennedy Blvd (Exit 39) was widened to 6 lanes in the mid-1970's.

Access to Tampa International Airport from St. Petersburg was improved by a flyover ramp from Interstate 275 northbound to Memorial Highway around 1977. This obviated the need for St. Petersburg residents needing to get to the airport to exit at Kennedy Blvd. The access to Cypress Street from this flyover was torn down in 2008 and replaced with access to Spruce Street next to Tampa International Airport as part of the Tampa International Airport interchange project.

Southbound entrance and northbound exit ramps at Westshore Blvd were removed after airport interchange improvements due to conflicting movements on the Interstate 275 mainline.

Additional northbound entry and southbound exit access at Himes Avenue in 1995, which coincided with the construction of the new Raymond James Stadium for the purpose of improving traffic flow on event days such as Tampa Bay Buccaneers games.

Reconstruction of the Interstate 275/Interstate 4 (Exit 45B, aka Malfunction Junction) interchange in 2000. A new flyover ramp was built carrying southbound Interstate 275 traffic to eastbound Interstate 4 on a slightly new alignment replacing the original flyover built in 1964.

Expansion from four to six lanes the segment of Interstate 275 north of FL 580/Busch Blvd. (Exit 50) to Interstate 275's northern terminus at Interstate 75, including direct access to Wesley Chapel and FL 56 at a new Exit 59.

Reconstruction of Interstate 275 from FL 60 (Exit 39) to just before the Hillsborough River in downtown Tampa west of Ashley Drive/Tampa Street (Exit 44). The major reconstruction features a wide median with commuter rail in mind and the reconstruction was completed in 2016.

St. Petersburg:

Improved access to the Gandy Boulevard interchange (Exit 28) in 1981 by constructing an access ramp from eastbound Gandy Boulevard to southbound Interstate 275 and another ramp for westbound Gandy Boulevard traffic coming from

northbound Interstate 275. These ramps were constructed in response to a high number of accidents from motorists having to make a U turn at the intersection of the frontage road (where it runs into the old Gandy Boulevard which is now 94 Av N) in order to go west on Gandy Boulevard or go south on Interstate 275.

Sign replacement projects around 1989, replacing signage as needed.

Improved access to Interstate 275 from Seminole and central Pinellas County utilizing the new County Road 296 corridor. County Road 296 was created by the union of 118 Av N, Bryan Dairy Road and 102 Av N thereby creating another cross county alternative for commuters.

Widening of Interstate 275 from four to eight lanes from Roosevelt Boulevard to 4 St N and the reconfiguration of the interchange at Ulmerton Road and Martin Luther King Street North, as well as addition of a ramp from eastbound Ulmerton Road to southbound Interstate 275 and southbound Martin Luther King Street North.

Concrete rehabilitation and sign replacement where needed on several sections of Interstate 275 in St. Petersburg. The north and south downtown St. Petersburg feeders, Interstate 375 and Interstate 175 respectively, recently received concrete rehabilitation and sign makeovers as well. Signage has also been replaced as needed.

Construction of the new Gateway Expressway (FL Toll 690) which will help provide limited access to Clearwater via both the Bayside Bridge and US 19. US 19 is a freeway with limited access and frontage roads from 49 St N in Pinellas Park to FL 580 in Clearwater and further conversion of US 19 to Tarpon Springs is in the planning stages.

And we can't forget the Howard Frankland Bridge:

A second span of the Howard Frankland Bridge was constructed in 1991 along with necessary improvements on both the St. Petersburg and Tampa sides of the bridge. The second span carries southbound traffic while the original 1960 span was renovated to carry northbound traffic. A new span of the Howard Frankland Bridge is currently under construction as of 2022 with estimated completion around late 2025. The new span will carry southbound traffic as well as express lanes and the 1991 span currently carrying southbound traffic will be retrofitted to carry northbound traffic. The original 1960 Howard Frankland Bridge is slated to be demolished after the new southbound span is completed.

Speaking of the Howard Frankland Bridge, how did it earn its righteous nicknames such as the Howard Frankenstein and the Car Strangled Banner?

We can trace this back to when the bridge opened in 1960, when it had no center barrier (only a little raised concrete divider) and the head-on collisions that have resulted. Once the center barrier was installed it cut down on these collisions but if anyone broke down on the bridge traffic backed up on either the St. Petersburg or Tampa sides, oftentimes for hours. Later on fencing was added to the top of the center barrier to reduce the head-on collision hazard further.

Back in the 1970's when the Howard Frankland was just only a single span a series of push buttons were installed on the center section to be used in case of a motorist

breakdown on the other side of the center section. If a button was pressed the words "STALLED VEHICLE" would flash on an electronic sign just before the center section of the bridge. There was a safety reason for this: The original Howard Frankland span did not have an emergency breakdown lane.

Another idea was tried in the early 1980's to increase motorist awareness of breakdowns on the Howard Frankland: Variable message signs but not of the electronic type that we are accustomed to today. Each sign was a unit with two yellow flashers that would be activated to convey important information. Normally the signs would have their regular wording but when the Howard Frankland had to be closed due to a serious accident the message of these signs changed to a detour route that would take motorists across the Gandy Bridge just by following a simple interstate shield sign with the legend N or S as appropriate.

By the time the second span of the Howard Frankland was constructed in the early 1990's the variable message signs were dismantled as the second span probably obviated their need. Today digital variable message signs as part of the Florida 511 initiative meet the need to convey important motorist information.

On some maps I see Interstate 275 labeled as State Road 93. Why is this?

Of course Interstate 275 is the responsibility of the federal government as to route number assignment. However, it is owned and maintained by the Florida Department of Transportation under strict guidelines set by the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. The State Road 93 number is a number that exists on paper within the Florida DOT for the purpose of construction and maintenance. It is also used by law enforcement agencies such as the Florida Highway Patrol in the preparation of accident reports, traffic citations and other reports because the official road number has to be referred to in a court of law such as traffic court.

I see the downtown St. Petersburg feeders, Interstate 375 labeled as State Road 592 and Interstate 175 labeled as State Road 594. Why is this?

Again, these state road numbers are numbers that exist on paper at the Florida DOT for the purpose of construction and maintenance and used by law enforcement for reports and citations as described in the previous question.

What is the speed limit on Interstate 275?

Interstate 275 has five variable speed limits, which are as follows (approximate metric equivalents are listed for your convenience):

70 mph or 110 km/h: Southern terminus to Exit 5 (US 19 south) and the Livingston Avenue underpass (north of Exit 53, Bearss Avenue) to the northern terminus.

65 mph or 105 km/h: Between Exit 5 (US 19 south) and the eastern end of the Howard Frankland bridge through St. Petersburg and from the Livingston Avenue underpass to in-between Exit 53 (Bearss Avenue) and Exit 52 (Fletcher Avenue).

60 mph or 100 km/h: North of Exit 52 (Fletcher Avenue) to north of Exit 50 (FL 580/Busch Blvd).

55 mph or 90 km/h: Between the eastern end of the Howard Frankland bridge and north of Exit 50 (FL 580/Busch Blvd), except for the 50 mph segment through downtown Tampa as described below.

50 mph or 80 km/h: Between Ashley Drive/Tampa Street (Exit 44) and Floribraska Avenue (Exit 46A) through the downtown Tampa area. 50 mph is the speed limit on the downtown St. Petersburg feeders, Interstate 375 and Interstate 175, as well.

Speed limits for construction work zones are as posted and speeding fines are doubled for violations in these areas per the Florida Statutes.

How do I reach the most important landmarks on Interstate 275?

Florida Railroad Museum: Southern terminus of Interstate 275 at Interstate 75 in Manatee County. From southbound Interstate 275 follow the ramps for northbound Interstate 75 to Tampa but use the exit immediately north of the Interstate 275 southern terminus, which will be CR 683 (Interstate 75's Exit 229) to Parrish. East on CR 683 for five miles to US 301, then south on US 301 for about a half a mile to 83rd Street East and the museum entrance.

Downtown St. Petersburg: Exit 23A (Interstate 375) or Exit 22 (Interstate 175) and follow either route to its end.

University of South Florida St. Petersburg (Bayboro) Campus: Use Exit 22 (Interstate 175) and follow Interstate 175 to its end. Turn right at the third traffic signal, which is 2 St S and proceed south to the campus.

Tropicana Field (this includes Tampa Bay Rays games and other events held at Tropicana Field): Exit 22 (Interstate 175) to the Martin Luther King/8 St S exit and follow the signs to the parking area. If you are coming from Tampa you can also use Exit 23 (Interstate 375) to the Martin Luther King St N exit and follow the signs.

Bayfront Health St. Petersburg (formerly Bayfront Medical Center) and All Children's Hospital: Exit 22 (Interstate 175) to the 6 St S exit. Turn right on 6 St S; All Children's is in front of you as you exit at 6 St S and Bayfront is one block south on 6 St S at 6 Av S.

Mahaffey Theater: Exit 22 (Interstate 175) to its end, which will place you onto 5 Av S. Continue east on 5 Av S to 1 St S and the theater is straight ahead.

Fort DeSoto Park: Exit 17 (FL 682/54 Av S) and proceed west through the Pinellas Bayway tollbooth and turn left at FL 679. You will pay two tolls – \$1.00 on FL 682 and 75 cents on FL 679 just before the park; remember the tolls you pay are paid to the Florida DOT. As of January 2012 there is a \$5.00 admission fee to get into Ft. DeSoto Park; this fee is paid at an entrance gate just before you make the turn to the beach areas.

St Pete Beach: Exit 17 (FL 682/54 Av S) and proceed west through the Pinellas Bayway tollbooth. Continue west across the draw bridge to Gulf Blvd. (FL 699). You will pay only one toll on FL 682 westbound which is 50 cents.

Treasure Island (Interstate 275 southbound): Exit 23B (5 Av N). Do not turn on 5 Av N – instead, proceed straight ahead to Central Avenue and turn right. Then proceed west on Central Avenue through the Treasure Island Causeway to Gulf Blvd.

Treasure Island (Interstate 275 northbound): Exit 20 (31 St S). Turn left and proceed north on 31 St S to Central Avenue. Turn left at Central Avenue and proceed west on Central Avenue through the Treasure Island Causeway to Gulf Blvd.

Madeira Beach: Exit 25 (38 Av N) and proceed west on 38 Av N to Tyrone Blvd N. Turn right on Tyrone Blvd N and follow the signs to FL 666, also known as the Madeira Beach Causeway. Follow FL 666 straight to Gulf Blvd. (FL 699).

Bay Pines VA Hospital: Exit 25 (38 Av N) and proceed west on 38 Av N to Tyrone Blvd N. Turn right on Tyrone Blvd N and the VA hospital will be on your left at the intersection of 100 Way N – it is clearly signed and you cannot miss it.¹

The Redington Beaches and Indian Shores: Exit 28 (FL 694/Gandy Blvd) and proceed west through Pinellas Park² and Seminole. Cross the Park Blvd Bridge to Gulf Blvd (FL 699) and follow the signs.

Pinellas Park: Exit 28 (FL 694/Gandy Blvd) and proceed west on Gandy Blvd. (you can go only west if exiting from Interstate 275 southbound). The road name changes from Gandy to Park Blvd. as you cross the overpass over US 19.

Largo (from Interstate 275 southbound): Exit 31 (FL 688/Ulmerton Road) and follow the signage for Ulmerton Road. You may follow Ulmerton Road or bear right at the SR 686 west exit.

Largo (from Interstate 275 northbound): Exit 30 (FL 686/Roosevelt Blvd) and follow SR 686 west. SR 686 multiplexes with Ulmerton Road (SR 688) for almost a mile; you may follow SR 686 west or continue on Ulmerton Road.

Clearwater (Interstate 275 northbound): Exit 30 (FL 686/Roosevelt Blvd) and follow SR 686 west past the St. Petersburg/Clearwater International Airport to CR 611 (it will be marked with signage to the Bayside Bridge and Clearwater). Right on CR 611 and proceed north on the Bayside Bridge to Gulf To Bay Blvd (SR 60). West on Gulf To Bay will take you to Clearwater including Clearwater Beach.

Clearwater (Interstate 275 southbound): Use Exit 39 (FL 60 westbound) in Tampa and follow the SR 60 signs across the Courtney Campbell Causeway to Clearwater. If you are headed to Clearwater Beach, follow SR 60 all the way to the end at the roundabout. *Alternative route:* If in the event of a situation requiring closure of the Courtney Campbell head across the Howard Frankland Bridge to Exit 31 (Ulmerton Road/SR 688) and follow Ulmerton Road to FL 686 (you will go under an overpass). Once under the overpass follow the signs for FL 686 to Clearwater as described in the previous paragraph.

¹ Although the Florida DOT has signage to the Bay Pines VA Hospital from 22 Av N (Exit 24), 38 Av N (Exit 25) is a quicker and more direct route especially if coming from the north.

² Although Park Blvd. is the same, FL 694 changes to CR 694 at 66 St N (FL 693) as Park Blvd. west of 66 St N is Pinellas County maintained. East of 66 St N Park Blvd. is Florida DOT maintained.

Tampa International Airport: Exit 39 (FL 60 westbound) and follow the signage as well as the airplane painted on the exit lane. The lane you are in takes you straight into the airport – you do not have to change lanes. Once you are at the airport follow the red or blue color coded signage to the airline of your choice. Also, pay attention to the variable message signage and tune your AM car radio to 1610 on the dial on your way into the terminal as valuable information is being conveyed (such as holiday parking advisories, etc.).

If you are flying into Tampa International Airport, be sure to see our separate flyer on tips for travelers flying into Tampa International Airport, available from our TIA page on Interstate275Florida.com.

Downtown Tampa (including the Amalie Arena and the Tampa Convention Center): If you are on northbound Interstate 275 use Exit 44 and bear to the right for Ashley/Tampa Streets. If you are on southbound Interstate 275 use Exit 45A and you can use either Jefferson Street or Ashley/Tampa Streets. Signage throughout Downtown Tampa will direct you to the landmark you are heading to.

Port of Tampa including Channelside: Use Exit 44 on northbound Interstate 275 and bear to the right for Ashley/Tampa Streets or Exit 45A for southbound Interstate 275 and bear to the left for Jefferson Street. Signage throughout Downtown Tampa will direct you there. However, if you are coming from points north on Interstate 75 a good alternative is to follow Interstate 75 south to the FL Toll 618/Selmon Crosstown Expressway exit (Exit 256) and follow the Crosstown west (\$1.25 toll) to the 22nd Street exit and follow the signs (stay in the local lanes and do not get onto the express lanes).

Ybor City: Use Exit 45B for Interstate 4 and proceed east to Interstate 4's Exit 1, which is 21st Street and 22nd Street. Turn right on 21st Street (it is one way southbound) and it will take you to the historic Ybor City shopping/entertainment district.

Raymond James Stadium (this includes Tampa Bay Buccaneers games, etc.):

If you are coming northbound on Interstate 275 from St. Petersburg, Exit 41 (Dale Mabry Highway northbound/US 92 East) is the exit; proceed north on Dale Mabry for about two miles. The stadium will be on your right as you pass Tampa Bay Boulevard; look for signage on game days directing you to parking.

If you are coming southbound on Interstate 275 you will want to get off at Exit 46B, Martin Luther King Jr Blvd., and proceed west for about two miles. The stadium will be on your left as you pass Himes Avenue; look for signage on game days directing you to parking.

If you are coming westbound on Interstate 4 from places such as Brandon, Plant City, Lakeland or points east you have two choices when you approach Interstate 275:

- 1) Proceed on Interstate 275 north to Exit 46B, Martin Luther King Jr Blvd., and proceed west for about two miles. The stadium will be on your left as you pass Himes Avenue; look for signage on game days directing you to parking.

2) Proceed on Interstate 275 south to Exit 41C, Himes Avenue. Proceed north on Himes Avenue for about two miles; the stadium will be on your left as you pass Tampa Bay Boulevard. Look for signage on game days directing you to parking.

Busch Gardens: Use Exit 50, Busch Boulevard (FL 580) and proceed east for about two miles. Busch Gardens will be on your left and follow the signs to parking.

University of South Florida's main Tampa campus: Use Exit 51, Fowler Avenue if you are on Interstate 275 north or Exit 52, Fletcher Avenue if you are on Interstate 275 south. The campus is about two miles east of Interstate 275. However, if you are headed to the Sun Dome at USF you definitely want to use Fowler Avenue.

Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI): Use Exit 51, Fowler Avenue and proceed east for about two miles. The museum will be on the right hand side of Fowler Avenue and is across the street from the University of South Florida.

Ocala, Gainesville and points north: Simply follow Interstate 275 north to Interstate 75 north. From Interstate 275's Exit 53 (Bears Avenue) it is 80 miles to Ocala and 117 miles to Gainesville.

The Sunshine Skyway Bridge: It's on Interstate 275 south of St. Petersburg. Unlike the Howard Frankland Bridge, the Sunshine Skyway carries a \$1.25 toll per passenger car and is payable by cash or SunPass. Fishing piers on either end of the Skyway provide for an excellent view of the bridge day or night (an admission fee is charged for the fishing piers). The drive across the Sunshine Skyway is majestic!

The Howard Frankland Bridge: It's on Interstate 275 between Exit 39 in Tampa (FL 60) and Exit 32 in St. Petersburg (4 St N/FL 687). No toll is charged. Northbound traffic uses the original 1960 span which has been refurbished in 1992 and southbound traffic uses the new span constructed in 1991.

I am a bicyclist and I use my bicycle to commute to work daily. Am I allowed to use Interstate 275 for my daily commute using my bicycle?



No! Florida Statutes prohibit use of any limited access highway including Interstate 275 by pedestrians and bicycles (see Section 316.091 of the Florida Statutes). Besides, traffic on Interstate 275 is extremely dangerous for pedestrians and bicycles, anyway.

Years ago the exit numbers were consecutive; now the exit numbers jump around all over the place. Why is this?

Around 1979 exit numbers based on the consecutive exit numbering system were installed on Interstate 275. In 2001 the Florida DOT changed the exit numbers on all Florida interstates, including Interstate 275, to the mile marker based exit numbering system. To help motorists with the change alongside the new exit number the old exit number is posted. This places Florida in line with nearly all other states that use the mile marker based exit numbering system. For comparison, just before Florida changed its exit numbers Georgia was a consecutive exit numbering state that changed over to mile marker based exit numbers.

Mile marker based exit numbering is not new in Florida, by the way. For years mile marker based exit numbering has been used on Florida's toll roads, including the Florida Turnpike and the Veterans Expressway/Suncoast Parkway.

What should I do if my vehicle breaks down on Interstate 275?

First of all, do not stop on the main roadway!

Immediately pull over to the nearest shoulder and stop there. Once you are on the shoulder and well off the roadway turn on your four way flashers and raise the hood of your car.

If you have a cell phone use it to dial *FHP (that's *347). This will connect you to the Florida Highway Patrol; tell the dispatcher that answers that you have broken down and you need assistance. A Road Ranger will be dispatched to your location to assist you.

Speaking of Road Rangers, the Road Ranger program is a free service provided by the Florida DOT to assist motorists who break down on Interstate 275. The Road Rangers can help you with the most common breakdowns such as flat tires, running out of gas, etc.

The call boxes that used to be a part of Interstate 275 from the northern terminus at Interstate 75 in Wesley Chapel (Exit 59) to Bearss Avenue (Exit 53) in Tampa as well as from the southern terminus at Interstate 75 in Parrish to US 19 south (Exit 5) are no more. The Florida DOT has taken the call boxes down not only on Interstate 275 but statewide as well. The only location on Interstate 275 where you will still see call boxes is the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, and these call boxes serve a dual purpose: Motorist aid as well as crisis intervention.

WARNING: *Stopping on the emergency shoulders of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, especially the high rise cable stayed main span, will elicit a response from the Florida Highway Patrol. The Sunshine Skyway's main span is monitored by video cameras and if you break down there, expect a visit from a Florida Highway Patrol trooper as the Sunshine Skyway is continuously patrolled. Of course if you do break down and*

you do not have a cell phone, use one of the dual purpose phones on the Sunshine Skyway and let the operator know that you need assistance.

What should I do if I am involved in an accident on Interstate 275?

First of all, keep the roadway clear by moving your vehicles to the shoulder of the highway if at all possible. Even the most minor accident on Interstate 275 can turn into a major traffic backup. Now there's a meaning behind the sign "Fender Bender – Move Vehicles From Traffic Lanes" on Interstate 275!

Moreover, do not drive away from an accident you are involved in. Doing so can result in serious criminal charges for leaving the scene of an accident.

If you have a cell phone use it to dial *FHP (*347); however, if there are any injuries dial 911. Be prepared to give the FHP dispatcher or 911 operator your location and how many vehicles are involved, as well as any injuries. Help in the form of a cavalcade of paramedics, EMT personnel and an FHP trooper (or a deputy sheriff or a police officer) will be sent your way.

Have your driver's license, registration and proof of insurance handy; the FHP trooper (or police officer or deputy sheriff) will request these from you so that the accident report can be completed. Keep the copy of the accident report the trooper prepares for your records (such as insurance, etc.).

Was the Sunshine Skyway Bridge incorporated into the Interstate 275 St. Petersburg project?

When the original Sunshine Skyway was opened in 1954 the Interstate Highway System was not enacted into law yet. A few years after the second original span opened in 1971 there were plans to bring the main spans up to interstate highway standards as the original Sunshine Skyway did not meet such standards.

9 May 1980 changed the plans somehow. For a while there was talk of not including Interstate 275 with the Sunshine Skyway which meant having Interstate 275 stop at the Skyway's northern terminus and having Interstate 275 begin again at the Skyway's southern terminus. (Talk about Temporary End Interstate 275 signage and To Interstate 275 trailblazers on the old Skyway!) Plans to bring Interstate 275 across the Sunshine Skyway became a reality when the decision was made in 1981 to replace the existing cantilever span with a new cable stayed span which opened in 1987.

Today the Sunshine Skyway Bridge is an integral part of Interstate 275, which completes the last link in the Tampa Bay area Interstate 275 construction puzzle.

There are dual purpose telephones on the new Sunshine Skyway main span. What is their purpose?

The telephones you see on the main span of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge serve two purposes:

- 1) Motorist aid (similar to the call boxes) but you speak to a dispatcher.
- 2) Crisis intervention.

Speaking of crisis intervention, the telephones connect the user to a crisis center in Tampa (The Crisis Center of Tampa Bay) and the counselor on duty can pinpoint exactly where the user is on the bridge. The idea of crisis intervention telephones on major bridges in the United States is not new; a similar setup can be found on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

Am I allowed to stop on the shoulder on top of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge to get a photo of that beautiful sunset overlooking the Gulf of Mexico?

That is a major no-no! Besides the call boxes on the high level main span, there are surveillance cameras mounted on both the north and south pylons which are connected to Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) dispatchers. If you are seen stopping on the shoulder of the main span of the Sunshine Skyway the dispatchers are watching you and an FHP trooper is dispatched to find out.

The shoulders of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge – as well as Interstate 275 and any limited access highway in Florida – are restricted to emergency stopping only such as a vehicle breakdown. Unauthorized stopping can mean a Florida Uniform Traffic Citation (see Section 316.1945 of the Florida Statutes). Besides, there is safety netting on the high level main span.

Instead, you can get that photo of that beautiful sunset overlooking the Gulf of Mexico by stopping at one of the rest areas located on either side of the Sunshine Skyway or at the Sunshine Skyway fishing piers, which are the remnants of the old Sunshine Skyway and give you an awesome view of the sunset overlooking the Gulf of Mexico that you always wanted for your Facebook profile page.

Where can I go on the web to find out more about the current Interstate 275 construction projects?

A good place to go to would be the Florida DOT's District 7 projects web site, fdottampabay.com. There you can get information related to project status as well as completion time frames and much more. You can get to that web site from our links page here at Interstate275Florida.com.

How can I plan my commute on Interstate 275 daily?

An excellent place to find out real time traffic information for Interstate 275 as well as other roads in the Tampa Bay region would be 511 Florida, which can be reached on the web at fl511.com (and is reachable from the links page here at Interstate275Florida.com) and by telephone (regular as well as cellular) in the Tampa Bay region simply by dialing 511.

You can also check for traffic incidents including accidents at the Florida Highway Patrol site at www.flhsmv.gov/fhp/. Scroll down to and click on the "Live Traffic Crash and Road Condition Report" and select Troop C (which includes the Tampa Bay area) and you will get a list of active traffic incidents for everywhere in the Tampa Bay area including Interstate 275.

In addition, the major Tampa Bay region media outlets provide traffic information in the mornings and evenings Monday through Friday. Some media outlets offer traffic information on the weekends as well.

Besides Interstate 275 in the Tampa Bay area, are there any other Interstate 275 highways along the route of Interstate 75 throughout the United States?

Yes, there are three other Interstate 275 highways in the United States:

Knoxville, Tennessee: Interstate 275 runs in a north-south direction beginning from its northern terminus with Interstate 75³ north of Knoxville to its southern terminus with Interstate 40 in downtown Knoxville. This used to be the former route of Interstate 75 until the Tennessee DOT made the decision to reroute Interstate 75 around the Knoxville area by using a multiplex with Interstate 640, a full Interstate 40 bypass around Knoxville. A complete bypass of the Knoxville area, Interstate 475, is planned.⁴

Cincinnati, Ohio: Interstate 275 is a circumferential highway that encircles the Cincinnati metropolitan area. What makes this Interstate 275 distinct that it serves three states: Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana (a portion of the western half of Interstate 275 dips into Indiana after crossing the Ohio River northbound and after a few miles the highway dips back into Ohio soil).

Detroit, Michigan: Interstate 275 is a partial bypass highway which runs from its southern terminus with Interstate 75 south of Detroit to its northern terminus at Interstate 696. According to Andy Field's Interstate-Guide.com site this Interstate 275 was supposed to reconnect with Interstate 75 north of Detroit but it was met with opposition.

With the increased traffic on Interstate 275, are there plans for some kind of bypass route besides Interstate 75 for through travelers?

According to an article on the Bay News 9 web site it is reported that the Florida DOT is embarking on a study for a possible bypass route. The bypass route's northern terminus would be on US 19 somewhere in Citrus County and work its way southeastward, crossing Interstate 75 and turning south. The highway would bisect Plant City and Lakeland as it crosses Interstate 4 and after some distance the highway would begin a southwestward turn to meet up with Interstate 75 south of Sarasota. It should be noted that this is only a study at this point; if the study concludes that this bypass should be built then you have issues such as right of way acquisition and preliminary and final design, not to mention the actual construction of the highway itself. All of this takes millions – if not billions – of dollars to design and construct, which would either take the form of having the federal government come up with a greater percentage of the cost plus the State of Florida coming up with the rest (and possible inclusion into the Interstate Highway System as a I-x75 route) or constructing the highway as a toll facility to pay off the bonds that would be required. In this day and age of lean budgets it all depends.

Why there are no exit numbers posted on Interstates 375 and 175 in downtown St. Petersburg?

The two downtown St. Petersburg feeders are less than a mile long. With a route of less than a mile and the exits are closely together I presume that the need to number the exits for the downtown St. Petersburg feeders would not be justified.

³ Interstate 75 is also multiplexed with Interstate 640.

⁴ See the [Interstate 475 entry](#) at Andy Field's Interstate-Guide.com for details.

I commute frequently between St. Petersburg and Bradenton using the Sunshine Skyway Bridge. How can I prepay my tolls so that it's one less task for me?

The answer to this is the SunPass prepaid toll program operated by the Florida Department of Transportation's Florida Turnpike Enterprise. You set up a prepaid account and purchase a little gizmo called a transponder; as you pass through the toll plaza your transponder is read and the toll is collected. Your SunPass transponder is good not only on the Sunshine Skyway but on all other toll roads operated by the Florida DOT as well as participating non-Florida DOT toll roads and bridges throughout the state as well as toll roads in Georgia and North Carolina. The SunPass web site has more details about the program and you can set up a prepaid account and order your transponder at the [SunPass web site](#). You can reach the SunPass site by going to our links page here at Interstate275Florida.com and selecting the SunPass link.

SunPass® is a registered trademark of the Florida Department of Transportation.

I live in the greater Baltimore area and I pay for my tolls on the Ft. McHenry Tunnel as part of my daily commute using my Maryland EZ-Pass. I am planning a trip to the Tampa/St. Petersburg area of Florida in the future. Will my Maryland EZ-Pass work in Florida in the SunPass lanes, especially on the Sunshine Skyway?

Yes! EZ-Pass became interoperable with Florida's SunPass in 2021. Your Maryland EZ-Pass will work on most Florida toll roads and bridges including the Sunshine Skyway. Feel free to use the SunPass lanes!

I entered Interstate 275 in Tampa at Exit 39 (SR 60) or in St. Petersburg at Exits 32 (4 St N) or Exit 31 (Ulmerton Road/M L King St N) to cross the Howard Frankland Bridge. Once on the bridge there is a major incident causing a traffic backup and I notice that one can go under the twin spans of the Howard Frankland at either end of the bridge. Is this allowed?

That's a major no-no! There are signs erected at the ends that proclaim "No Trespassing – Authorized Vehicles Only". Unless directed by the Florida Highway Patrol or another law enforcement agency, you may not use these turnarounds and unauthorized use of these turnarounds on the Howard Frankland may result in a fine.

An article in the Friday, 3 November 2006 edition of the free newspaper distributed by the *St. Petersburg Times*, *tbt (Tampa Bay Times)*, described the Howard Frankland turnarounds as one of the Tampa Bay area's ten best secrets and that these turnarounds could be used if you see a major backup on the Howard Frankland. Again, only use these turnarounds at the direction of the Florida Highway Patrol or any other law enforcement agency and not at your own personal convenience; use of the Howard Frankland turnarounds at your own convenience may result in issuance of a Florida Uniform Traffic Citation which leads to a fine.

Remember, you can dial 511 from anywhere in the Tampa Bay area to get up to the date traffic conditions for the Howard Frankland Bridge as well as Interstate 275 and all the other major highways in the Tampa Bay region. The key here is preplanning your trip if you are headed from St. Petersburg to Tampa and vice versa or anywhere else in between in the Tampa Bay region. That way, if there is a traffic incident on

the Howard Frankland Bridge you can plan a different route before you even turn onto Interstate 275 and safely get to your destination in a timely manner.

Am I allowed to fish from the Howard Frankland Bridge or the little bridge on 4 St N (Exit 32) that crosses Big Island Gap?

No! Fishing from any bridge so marked "No Fishing From Bridge" is prohibited per Florida Statutes (FSS 316.1305). There was a recent *St. Petersburg Times* Dr. Delay article (22 January 2006) that addresses people who are fishing on the bridge that connects 4 St N with Interstate 275; signage has been erected stating that fishing is prohibited from the bridge as well as pedestrians are prohibited as this bridge is considered part of the Exit 32 ramps.

In fact, the Florida DOT has also posted No Trespassing signage on either end of the little bridge on 4 St N that crosses Big Island Gap due to homeless activity under the bridge.

When I travel Interstate 275 into St. Petersburg from Tampa or Bradenton, I see signage designating the highway as the St. Petersburg Parkway/William C. Cramer Memorial Highway. What is this?

In 2005 the Florida Legislature passed a resolution designating the segment of Interstate 275 in St. Petersburg from the Sunshine Skyway Bridge to the Howard Frankland Bridge the St. Petersburg Parkway/William C. Cramer Memorial Highway. The St. Petersburg Parkway designation was the work of St. Petersburg's city leaders to designate a landmark which is easily associated with residents and visitors alike while the William C. Cramer Memorial Highway designation is named after former Florida congressman William C. Cramer who was largely responsible for the development of St. Petersburg's road network which included the passage of Interstate 275 through the city.

What should I do if I inadvertently exit Interstate 275 at Exit 32, 4 St N? The signs before this exit say No Reentry Southbound!

Don't panic; here's what to do if you inadvertently exit onto 4 St N/FL 687 (Exit 32) from Interstate 275:

Proceed south on 4 St N to Gandy Blvd. Turn right at Gandy Blvd. Once on Gandy Blvd. you can continue west to rejoin Interstate 275 south or you may bear right onto Roosevelt Blvd. and continue west on Roosevelt Blvd. if you are headed onto Ulmerton Road, as Roosevelt runs into Ulmerton Road.

What should I do if I inadvertently exit Interstate 275 at Exit 31, the exit complex for Martin Luther King St N and FL 688/Ulmerton Road? The signs before Exit 32 say No Reentry Southbound!

If you exited at Exit 31 but just before the split for Martin Luther King St N and FL 688/Ulmerton Road, bear to the right for Ulmerton Road but remain in the left lane. Go to the first turnaround on Ulmerton Road, make a safe U-turn, and from there you can rejoin Interstate 275 south.

If you exited at Exit 31 but you took the ramp for Martin Luther King St N, proceed south on Martin Luther King St N to the first traffic signal which is Roosevelt Blvd/FL

686. Turn right at Roosevelt Blvd. Once on Roosevelt Blvd. proceed west to Interstate 275 and you can rejoin Interstate 275 south there. The turn from westbound Roosevelt Blvd. to southbound Interstate 275 is not signalized and it can back up at times throughout the day; be careful and use caution when driving in this area.

What should I do if I intended to exit Interstate 275 north at Exit 53, Bearss Avenue but I overrun the exit? The sign back there says Next Exit 10 Miles!

First and foremost, ***do not attempt to turn around or back up in the emergency lane! This is not only illegal, it is dangerous!***

Proceed on Interstate 275 north to Exit 59, FL 56. The distance to this exit from Bearss Avenue (Exit 53) is about 6 miles. Once at FL 56 you may turn around at the interchange and proceed back to Interstate 275 and Bearss Avenue.

What should I do if I enter the flyover for St. Petersburg rather than the flyover for Tampa from Tampa International Airport headed to Interstate 275?

As mentioned in the previous question, ***do not attempt to turn around or back up in the emergency lane! This is not only illegal, it is dangerous!***

You will have to follow the St. Petersburg flyover to southbound Interstate 275 which will take you across the Howard Frankland Bridge. Exit Interstate 275 at the first exit after the bridge, which is Exit 32, FL 687/4 St N. Turn around at the first U-turn on 4 St N and re-enter Interstate 275 north; at that point you will be headed for Tampa.

Why is 54 Av N (Exit 26) built differently than the rest of the exits on Interstate 275 in St. Petersburg?

You are right, the 54 Av N exit (Exit 26) is built differently than the rest of the exits on Interstate 275 in St. Petersburg. The typical Interstate 275 exit in St. Petersburg features the mainline Interstate 275 going over the roadway. But at 54 Av N, Interstate 275 goes *under* rather than over the roadway.

The 54 Av N exit at Interstate 275 was built differently due to the geometry of the area. First, you have a hill ridge that extends from roughly the 54 Av N exit on Interstate 275 westward towards an area west of 49 St N in the Lealman area. This hill ridge is seen between 58 Av N and 62 Av N and is believed to be the highest point in southern Pinellas County.⁵ Second, the interchange was also built on the site of a spring which feeds into a nearby lake, which is partially responsible for the serious cracking of the concrete pavement on Interstate 275's southbound lanes as it passes under 54 Av N. These issues have been continuously addressed from time to time, especially when a concrete resurfacing project takes place.

Earlier aerials I have seen of Interstate 275 as it was in the planning stages had an interchange being constructed at 62 Av N rather than 54 Av N. An interchange at 62 Av N would have alleviated these issues by routing the Interstate 275 mainline over 62 Av N as it is today and I believe it would have been constructed as a diamond interchange much like the other interchanges on Interstate 275 in St. Petersburg.

⁵ This is why most of the Lealman area is in a hurricane non-evacuation zone.

However, you have three schools to the east of Interstate 275 at 54 Av N – Sexton Elementary, Northeast High and (to the north of Northeast High) Meadowlawn Middle – and with the school traffic and a widened 54 Av N in the Lealman area having an Interstate 275 exit at 54 Av N makes good sense.

When the major Interstate 275 reconstruction project in Tampa is completed, there is a wide median in the center. What is the purpose of the wide median?

The reason for a wide median on Interstate 275 in Tampa between Tampa Airport/FL 60 (Exit 39) and Ashley Drive/Tampa Street/Scott Street (Exit 44) is easy: To facilitate the addition of light rail or commuter rail as a mass transit choice in the Tampa Bay region.

When I drive Interstate 75 back home to the Tampa Bay region, I see mileage for Tampa but not for St. Petersburg. Why is this?

On Interstate 75, Tampa is referenced as a control city. The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) maintains a list of places to be used as control cities on American interstate highways.

There is a lot of criteria that has to be met for a city or place to be designated as a control city and that criteria is set by AASHTO. The criteria for a city or place to be designated as a control city are as follows:

1. City is located near the junction of two interstate routes.
2. City is a state capital.
3. The termini of an interstate route.

As such, Tampa meets two of the criteria for designation as a control city because 1) Tampa is a junction of two interstate routes, Interstate 4 at Interstate 275 as well as Interstate 4 at Interstate 75, and 2) Tampa is the western termini of Interstate 4 at Interstate 275.

Any changes to the control city list require a review from AASHTO's Control Cities Task Force, with a recommendation to AASHTO's Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering to approve or disapprove the change. The final vote to make any change to the control city list rests with AASHTO's Standing Committee on Highways.

The Florida DOT's stance on control cities is to keep the list as is. However, to solve the St. Petersburg mileage question, the Florida DOT uses the second line of the three line mileage sign to show the distance to the junction of Interstate 275, which does go to St. Petersburg. If this is not practical, then supplemental signage is used, such as mileage signage to both Interstates 275 and 4 on northbound Interstate 75 coming from the western terminus of the Alligator Alley just east of Naples.

Bonus Question:

If I am driving on Interstate 75 from Tampa or St. Petersburg to Miami via the Alligator Alley, I see mileage for Naples first then it changes to Miami once you get past Immokalee Road (Exit 111). Doesn't Naples qualify as a control city?

Again, there is criteria that has to be met for a city or place to be a control city per AASHTO as mentioned in the previous question. As for Naples being a control city, it

was a one point in time when Interstate 75 terminated there while the remainder of Interstate 75 in South Florida was being constructed including the transformation of Alligator Alley from a two lane highway to a four lane highway that meets interstate highway standards. As such, being a termini of Interstate 75 at one point Naples would have met the criteria. Now that Miami is the national southern termini of Interstate 75 at the Palmetto Expressway (FL 826), Naples would more than likely not meet AASHTO control city criteria and I believe there would be a justification for the Florida DOT to submit a request to AASHTO to update the control city list for Interstate 75.

Any changes to the control city list have to be submitted by a state DOT to AASHTO for their review and approval. Once AASHTO gives the final approval then the DOT in question can update mileage signage.

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