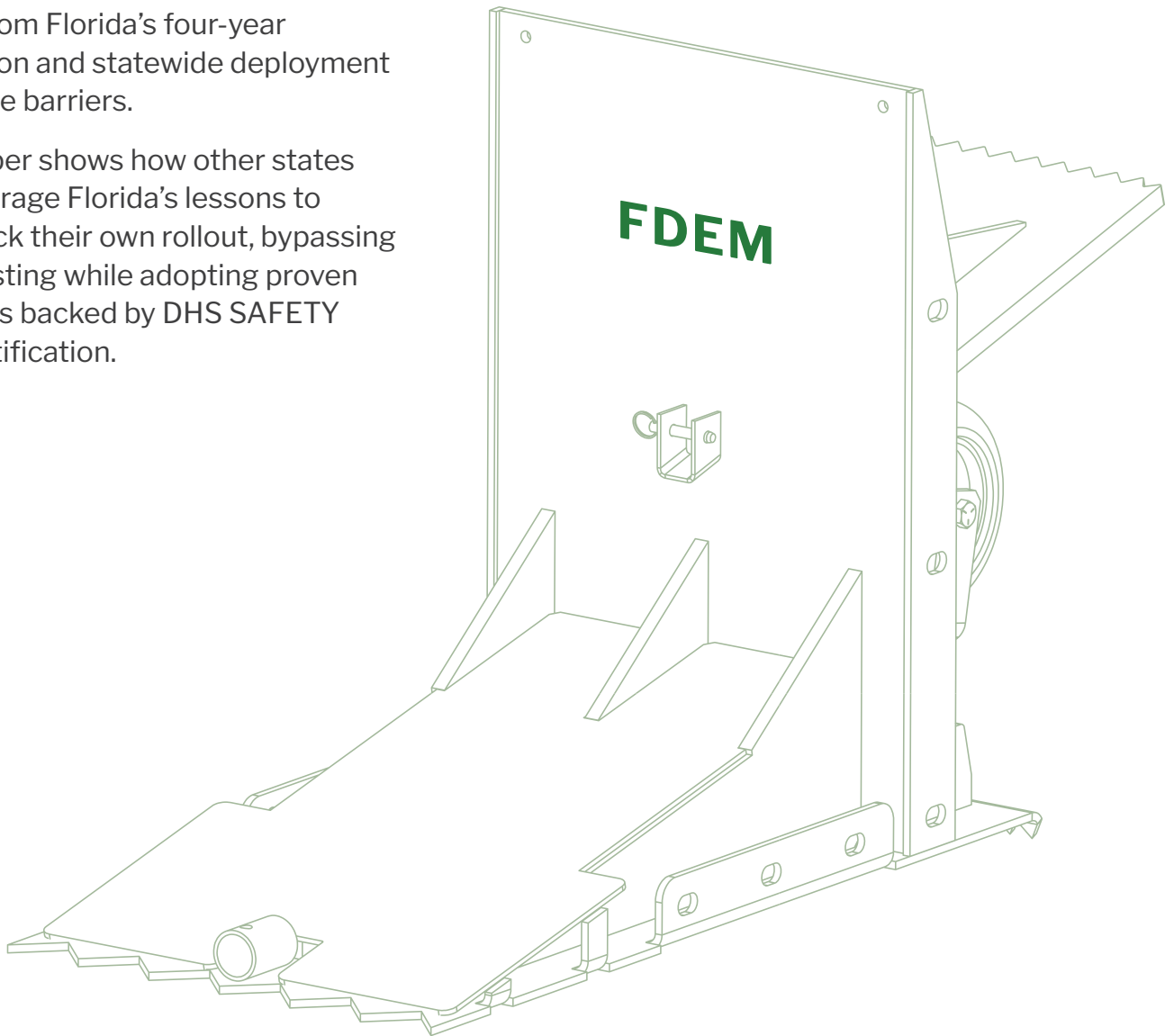


From Concept to Command: How Florida Selected Meridian's Mobile Barriers for Statewide Emergency Response

Learn from Florida's four-year evaluation and statewide deployment of mobile barriers.

This paper shows how other states can leverage Florida's lessons to fast-track their own rollout, bypassing early testing while adopting proven solutions backed by DHS SAFETY Act Certification.



WHITE PAPER
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Executive Summary

The Florida Division of Emergency Management has taken a statewide proactive approach to being prepared for extreme events including hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fires, and hostile vehicle mitigation. Having technology and product that can be used over multiple deployment options was critical in their decision making.

In 2025, the Florida Division of Emergency Management made a \$11.9 million statewide purchase of 100 Archer Trailer Kits. This decision represented the phased approach over multiple years in a process that began with county-wide level pilot purchases, on-the-ground evaluations, and a research effort led by Dr. Todd Smith. That work gave Florida the confidence to move forward with Meridian as the proven solution. With the results of this multi-year process now documented, other states can bypass the exploratory phase and move straight to implementation with a proven, field-tested solution.

The program continues to expand due to Meridian's efforts in achieving DOT approval under the MASH standard. No other products were able to meet all the requirements necessary for preparedness planning and ultimately protection of people and their communities.

The message is clear: mobility, speed, and field readiness are no longer optional. Florida chose Meridian's solution. Here is why it works: unmatched portability, rapid deployment without power, proven field performance, 25-year warranty, no maintenance, and SAFETY Act liability protection.

This White Paper serves as a roadmap so other states can avoid years of the learning process and accelerate directly to proven statewide deployment.

Introduction: Emergency Readiness in a Shifting Climate

The U.S. has averaged over \$20 billion in disasters annually since 2020. FEMA is signaling a shift from direct response to state-level resilience. Florida, a state heavily impacted by hurricane seasons and population surges, has launched a statewide emergency mobility program to address lagging response times, fragmented logistics, and asset deployment bottlenecks. This paper highlights how Florida's initiative addresses those challenges, and how others can adopt it.

The Florida Model: Case Study Snapshot

Florida's Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) has taken a statewide, proactive approach to hostile vehicle threats. The Anti-Vehicle Mitigation Barrier Program is a multi-year plan that brings consistency across the state with regional coordination, secure funding, and standardized equipment. The program was shaped in part by national incidents, including the 2017 Charlottesville vehicle attack, which accelerated state-level efforts to protect soft targets at public events.

The goal over the course of a number of years is to provide six trailer sets per county across Florida's 67 counties, delivering 48 barriers per county for comprehensive coverage. To support implementation, Florida established a Vehicle Barriers Committee, tasked with coordinating the regional rollout of the program. A seven-year phased schedule has been proposed, with specific investment targets and operational benchmarks tied to high-attendance events across the state.

Meridian's relationship with Florida began in early 2017, when Jacksonville Fire evaluated solutions to improve crowd protection. Several demonstrations introduced the Archer 1200 barriers to city officials and decision makers. Recognizing that a consistent state-level plan would be required, Jacksonville Assistant Fire Chief Todd Smith began a case study that tracked the use and benefits of Meridian barriers. The City of Jacksonville first purchased a single trailer set, then gradually added more as funding became available, deploying barriers at city events to document results. Pinellas County, Ft. Lauderdale, and other jurisdictions also began making individual purchases during this period. These local deployments formed the evidence base that Todd Smith used in discussions with FEMA and DHS. This eventually led Jacksonville to acquire 100 barriers.



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Plan, Build, Deliver: Framework in Action

Plan

- Risk-tiered mapping of counties with threat overlays (flooding, population density, access zones)
- Regional staging blueprints for Archer Trailer Kits and trained operators
- Digital coordination between law enforcement, DOT, and fire services

Build

- 100 Archer Trailer Kits on order, each equipped with 8 Archer 1200 barriers
- SAFETY Act-backed systems to reduce municipal liability exposure
- DSNP-certified local teams prepared for operational rollout

Deliver

- Pending delivery and pilot deployment phases
- Pre-coordinated playbooks at the county EOC level are in development
- Scalable from high-risk urban zones to rural intersections

Anticipated Results & Readiness Benchmarks

- 20+ trailer kits scheduled for early-stage deployment across coastal and central Florida
- Projected reduction in mobilization time by 60%
- Asset standardization expected to improve inter-county collaboration
- FEMA coordination underway for potential mutual aid alignments



Roadmap for Adoption

The Florida model proves that agencies do not need to spend years in evaluation. By leveraging Florida's results, states can accelerate directly to procurement, training, and deployment.

Phase 1: Assess & Strategize

- Use THIRA/SPR inputs to prioritize counties with infrastructure gaps

Phase 2: Collaborate & Train

- Host regional summits with EMAs, DOT, police, and private sector security vendors
- Launch DSNP mobile training units

Phase 3: Deploy & Optimize

- Begin rollout modeled after Florida's planned 5-month delivery schedule
- Monthly readiness drills with playbook refinement

Recommendation for other states: Agencies can model Florida's approach by bypassing the initial multi-year research and pilot phases, adopting a proven, field-tested solution from the outset.

The Path Forward

This case illustrates that scalable emergency mobility does not require federal waiting periods or static infrastructure. By choosing Meridian's proven modular systems, including the Archer Trailer Kit with integrated Archer 1200 barriers, Florida shows how strategic procurement of SAFETY Act Certified solutions can set a new standard for emergency preparedness. The approach delivers immediate deployment capability along with long term liability protection.

Florida's four-year effort created a template that other states can immediately use, saving time, resources, and uncertainty in protecting their communities.

References and Source Notes

- Florida's Anti-Vehicle Mitigation Barrier Program details and a 7-year phased cost structure are derived from Dr. Todd Smith's public safety presentation (slides 6–10), which was provided internally by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM).
- Florida Division of Emergency Management's \$13.6 million investment in Archer Trailer Kits is cited from internal procurement summaries and presentations shared with stakeholders in 2025.
- Archer 1200 barrier SAFETY Act Certification: U.S. Department of Homeland Security Designation. See <https://www.safetyact.gov>.
- Charlottesville vehicle attack reference: NPR, 'Car Plows Into Crowd At Charlottesville Rally,' August 12, 2017. <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/12/543510119/car-plows-into-crowd-at-charlottesville-rally>.
- FEMA THIRA/SPR methodology: FEMA.gov, Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Guide. <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/hazard-mitigation-planning/thira>
- DSNP (Disaster Site Notification Protocol): Florida Division of Emergency Management operator credentialing standard. Program materials on file with county EMAs.
- Projected 60% reduction in mobilization time based on internal FDEM regional staging assessments, January 2025 planning session notes.

About Meridian Rapid Defense Group

Meridian Rapid Defense Group (MRDG) engineers and manufactures advanced mobile barrier systems that keep people, communities, and places safer. Our flagship Archer 1200 is the world's most crash-tested mobile barrier, and our Archer Guard delivers MASH TL-3 standards for positive protection in work zones. Every MRDG product, service, and technology is certified to the highest safety standards, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's SAFETY Act.



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