

# Highways Emergency phones will aid drivers in distress

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SANTA CRUZ — The reality has usually been this — if your car breaks down on Highway 17, you raise the hood and pray.

Within six weeks, there will be another, better option. If your car breaks down on Highway 17 — or Highways 1, 9, 129 or 152 — you'll be able to walk to an emergency call box and reach a Highway Patrol dispatcher within moments.

Over the next six weeks, 118 solar-powered emergency call boxes will be placed

along the county's highways. Motorists in distress will be able to ask CHP dispatchers to send a tow truck, a traffic officer or an ambulance to their location simply by lifting the phone off its hook. The boxes, which will be marked with large blue and white signs, will be posted at intervals of either one or one-half miles apart.

The phones, which operate on batteries charged by solar power, are cellular and thus remain functional even if local phone lines go down.

Similar call boxes will be popping up along roadsides throughout Northern California in the months to come. Santa Clara County, San Mateo County, Alameda County, Contra Costa County, Solano County and Sonoma County highways are all scheduled to have call boxes.

The money for the call boxes is coming directly from county residents, who pay a \$1 annual fee on each motor vehicle registered in the county.

— By Tom Long