

IN THE

ZONE

# Runaway Vehicle Rescue

On December 23, 2014, Gerald Beck and Xavier Merwarth headed home after a long day in the field. Xavier was driving at a steady pace down Route 33 (a multi-lane divided highway) in Northampton County, PA, near the town of Wind Gap. Gerald noticed that Xavier became very quiet and the truck was drifting onto the left shoulder of the road. He tried to get Xavier's attention, but it rapidly became clear that something was wrong. Thinking quickly, Gerald grabbed the steering wheel in an attempt to correct their path, but Xavier had a firm grip. Gerald had to use considerable strength to maneuver the steering wheel, all the while not being able to reach the vehicle's pedals. It was clear that Xavier was unwell. Gerald decided to drop the car into a lower gear and use the adjacent left guard rail to perform a friction stop.

Fearing for their lives but doing his best to maintain a clear head, Gerald carefully edged the truck closer and closer to the guard rail until the truck shuddered and made a loud scraping sound. Gerald was anticipating the sound and the impact, but when it actually happened it was a shock, especially at the accelerated rate of speed they were traveling. He quickly glanced at Xavier, whose eyes were glassy and fixed ahead. The vehicle's speed was reducing due to the grinding on the guard rail. Still traveling at 40 miles per hour, they approached a metal PennDOT sign straddling the guard rail and struck it with such force that it exploded in a shower of metal.



Jennifer Harmon (Assistant Branch Manager Eastern PA Branch), Gerald Beck (Crew Member Eastern PA Branch), Bill Elton (Branch Manager Eastern PA Branch), Lindsey Sokolski (Field Superintendent Eastern PA Branch)

At this point the truck had slowed enough that Gerald could take it completely out of gear and clear Xavier's foot from the accelerator pedal. Catching his breath, Gerald was still processing what had happened. He realized that Xavier was having a seizure. Gerald tried to make Xavier comfortable and told him he was calling for help. Gerald called 911 and did his best in the fading light of the day to provide their exact location. The truck was on the left shoulder of Route 33 in fast moving traffic, and he knew they were not out of danger yet.

Gerald kept telling Xavier that it was going to be OK and that help was on the way. As they were waiting for the police to arrive, he asked Xavier if he could read the mile marker in front of them. In a quiet voice, Xavier said, "17." He was slowly coming out of it. The state police eventually arrived on the scene, and Xavier was taken away in an ambulance. Gerald was finally able to see the damage done to the truck and was in a state of disbelief about what had just happened. He was glad no one was injured along the way.

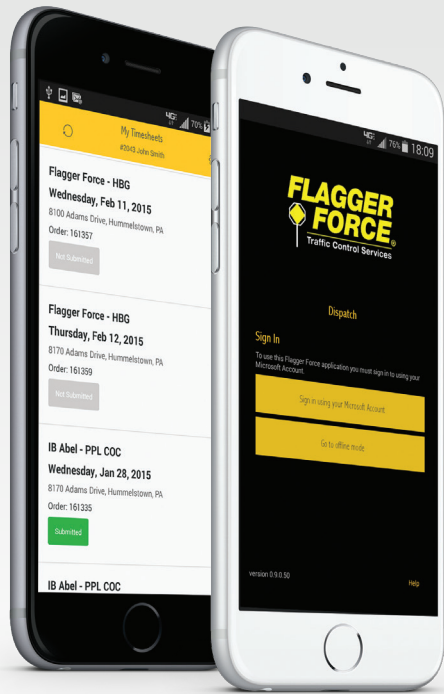
Quick thinking, good awareness, and a calm demeanor saved Gerald and Xavier from what could have been a very serious incident. Gerald was awarded the **Safety•Driven. SPIRIT Award** for his heroic actions. This incident is an important reminder to stay alert and vigilant at all times and be ready for the unexpected when on the road.

Xavier is currently on medical leave and is being treated for his seizures. The entire Flagger Force team wishes him the very best and a speedy recovery.



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# Flagger Force is Going Mobile: App Update

The Flagger Force mobile app roll-out is moving right along. Several weeks of in-house testing and optimizing has proved the apps are ready for a pilot program with a client. A select team of Flagger Force employees [Vernon Groff, Brian Marley, Michael Irvin, Delano Haines, Jason Hess, Brian Sydock, and Shane Wolford] have generously volunteered their time and efforts to participate in the pilot alongside our long time client, I.B. Abel. The pilot team will work on I.B. Abel jobs for a period of two weeks to conduct a trial run of the application.

The team will be submitting timesheets via the Timesheet app and receiving and confirming job assignments via the Dispatch app. The team will be using an 8" Samsung Galaxy Tablet for the testing. After a testing period of one week, the systems will be evaluated and any needed adjustments will be made. The next step will be rolling out training and actual deployment of the apps to a wider audience. We are pleased to see outstanding progress and improvements to our capabilities through this investment and look forward to introducing it company-wide for everyone to experience.

BELOW: Matt Allen, Director of Technology, works with crew leader Shane Wolford.



# The Legend of Flim Smith

Flagger Force felt that it was time for our newsletter to spotlight some of our incredible employees. Our first spotlight features one of the most seasoned field employees in the history of Flagger Force: Flim Smith. Flim was the second full-time field employee Flagger Force hired, but he was the first person to be entered into our dispatch system making his official employee number "1." By all accounts, Flim is considered "a gentleman of the old school" and well liked by both employees and clients. Flim is proud to say he is "76 years young" and will turn 77 in June. We thought it was a good time to sit down with Flim and hear his story...



**Flagger Force:** Tell us how you got your start at Flagger Force.

**Flim:** I was a truck driver for 41 years and retired at 65. I tried to take it easy for about a month and then decided I needed something more to do. I heard about a flagging job opportunity and met Mike and Michele Doner just as they were starting their own company. I like being outside and traveling, so it sounded like a good thing to do part time. Boy did things get busy! Soon it was 2006, and that May I joined Flagger Force as a full-time employee.

**Flagger Force:** How has Flagger Force changed over the years?

**Flim:** They grew a lot bigger really quickly. The business really took off from the very beginning. In the early days, I worked a lot with the first full-time field employee Greg "Beetle" Riedel. Sadly, Beetle passed away in 2008, but we had some great times together. Beetle normally drove the truck (at the time Flagger Force only had one truck, #401). Then we got more trucks – hundreds. We also got more branch offices. Flagger Force has gotten bigger, but to me in many ways it has remained the same. There are a bunch of great people here that know how to do their job and do it safely. There is a feeling of family here for me.

**Flagger Force:** Do you recall any memorable stories from the field?

**Flim:** Every day is different, and you come across so many different people and circumstances on the road. I do remember the old Ford Ranger pickups we used to drive had a design flaw where the automatic fuel cutoff switch (known as a "kill switch" intended to reduce the risk of fire if the vehicle flipped over in an accident), was located under the passenger side of the dashboard. If you were not careful, your foot could trip the switch and the truck would stop. One time Beetle and I were headed to a job in State College, PA and had to go through a road construction project on Route 322/22 near Lewistown, PA. I accidentally bumped the kill switch and we stopped – blocking traffic. It took us a bit of time to figure out what happened – that's how we first discovered the kill switch! We eventually got the truck back on the road, but I will always remember that day.

**Flagger Force:** It has been rumored that you are the only field employee with your name affixed to the outside of your work truck. Is that true?

**Flim:** Yes, it is true. Michele Doner decided to do that for me in 2010 in recognition of my time with the company. I was very happy to have that honor, and I am still driving that same truck for Flagger Force.

**Flagger Force:** As someone who has been doing traffic control for a while, what advice can you offer to new hires?

**Flim:** Pay attention during your training – you will learn what you need to know to do your job well at the [Flagger Force] Academy. When you get on the road, listen to experienced crew leaders and apply what you have learned. Sometimes only experience can tell you how to set up safely on a particular road.

**Flagger Force:** What's the most important thing you have learned at Flagger Force?

**Flim:** Pay attention. Pay attention to

where you are, the traffic, the clients, and the drivers. You have to stay alert. Employees quickly learn that paying attention is the most important skill you can have for this job.

**Flagger Force:** You are still working at Flagger Force, but what are your plans for the coming years?

**Flim:** I'm not sure. I have had to take some family leave time. My wife recently had a stroke. She needs me to be with her 24/7 as she recovers. She is my first priority right now. We have family who will check on us and help from time to time, but I am the primary caretaker, so my future really depends on her right now.

**Flagger Force:** Flim, everyone at Flagger Force wishes you and your family the best and sincerely hopes that your wife makes a good recovery. It was a pleasure having a chance to speak with you.

**Flim:** Thank you. It has been a pleasure working for Flagger Force for all of these years.





ABOVE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Ben Johnson, Brian Smathers, Joe Gibbons, Justin Chenault

We are excited to announce that Flagger Force is expanding into new territories this year. The time has come to significantly expand our service territory into Western Pennsylvania and Northern Virginia with two new operations branches and training centers. These new locations will be in Pittsburgh, PA and Winchester, VA greater metro areas and will service numerous counties in each market.

In preparation for the expansion, we promoted some of Flagger Force's best and brightest employees to lead these new operations: Brian Smathers and Joe Gibbons for our Western Pennsylvania branch, and Ben Johnson and Justin Chenault for our Northern Virginia branch. Similar to the pioneers of years ago, these individuals are headed west and south for an opportunity to carve out a frontier existence for both Flagger Force and themselves.

We are not sending them unprepared: a comprehensive expansion team curriculum was developed to encompass the operational **Safety-Driven** leadership culture of Flagger Force. The leadership training for this expansion consisted of three phases.

## PHASE I

Leadership, management, legal and compliance, information technology, and operations coursework. The team was also given two paid days to visit their perspective branch location.

## PHASE II

Tactical field coaching, a how-to instructional on teaching the training courses effectively, and fleet asset management training.

## PHASE III

Intensive mentoring period with branch leadership teams to observe and put into practice their training in real situations.

The training was conducted by subject matter experts within our company. These experts were able to teach this team what they have learned from their years of experience in their roles. The expansion team will be prepared for success as we open both locations in the second quarter of 2015. Please extend congratulations to Brian, Joe, Ben, and Justin as they embark on their new journeys. Flagger Force is committed to the development and advancement of our employees. New opportunities for growth are being created every day, and we are doing our very best to make these opportunities available to those who step forward and express their commitment to grow within the organization.



## Asking Permission on Private Property

Finding a good place to park at a job site can sometimes be frustrating and challenging. As Flagger Force employees, it is important that we respect the property and privacy of landowners near our job sites. A brief and polite chat upfront with a property owner can save a great deal of time and frustration later. If you ever find yourself in a situation where private property is the only place to park, make sure that you have permission to park there.

**Before talking to a landowner, ensure all other options have been ruled out:**



On street parking past the work zone



Parking on a nearby street with on street parking



Parking in the termination area

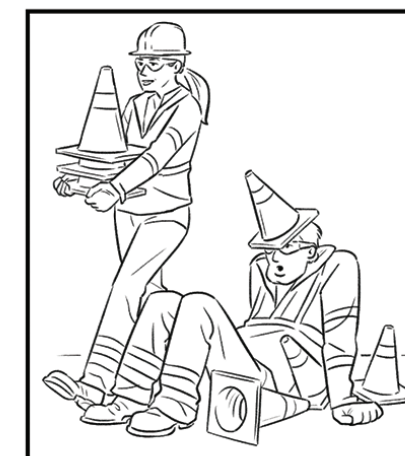


Parking on nearby public property

If none of these parking options are available, consider parking at a nearby business. If this is what you decide, please note that it is necessary to ask permission and respect the response of that property owner. The last option for parking should be private property, and it is required that you have authorization before parking. Kindly explain to the property owner why you are there and how long you expect to be there, then ask if you would be able to park your vehicle on their property. It is required that we respect the response of the property owner. If permission is granted, be sure that you know specifically where you are able to park your vehicle, as well as whether the conditions permit parking in those areas. Please do not park where you will make ruts or damage property, because you will be responsible for fixing it. Make certain that you never drive through or park on someone's lawn. Parking in the correct areas with the correct permission will not only save time, but also save the headache of possibly having to move your vehicle or having a complaint filed against you. Thank you for following this important company protocol.



## As the Paddle Turns



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WE ARE INTRODUCING A FLAGGER FORCE COMIC STRIP CALLED "AS THE PADDLE TURNS." THIS WILL BE A RECURRING NEWSLETTER FEATURE THAT AIMS TO TAKE A LIGHT HEARTED LOOK AT THE MANY REAL THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN THE FIELD EVERYDAY.



# Dealing with AGGRESSIVE Dogs

The Humane Society estimates that 40% of all households have at least one dog. When working in residential areas, assume there is a dog at each location. Being prepared for a potentially aggressive dog situation can prevent injuries. Stay alert and consider your safety at all times – any dog bite is serious. Here are some tips for optimum safety when dealing with dogs:

### Become familiar with your location:

Whistle or call out to see if there is a loose dog nearby.

If a dog is loose, politely ask its owner to confine it. A loose dog near an active work zone is dangerous for everyone, including the dog. Owners may say their dog does not bite, but that only means the dog will not bite them.

### If you encounter an aggressive dog:

Do not panic. Dogs are good at reading people and can sense fear. If you run or scream, you may actually threaten the dog and cause it to attack.

Make yourself rigid and motionless like a safety cone. Keep your arms and hands at your sides with your fingers curled in a fist. Stand sideways and don't square off with the dog or make direct eye contact. The dog may come close to you or sniff you without actually biting, so do your best to relax and stay calm.

If the dog continues to threaten you, try tossing it something to chew on, such as a water bottle – this may distract it long enough for you to escape. Once the dog loses interest in you, back away slowly and leave the area.

### If you are attacked:

Find anything you can use to place between yourself and the dog, such as a tree. If you are forced to fight back, use your body weight to your advantage and try to knock the dog down.

If you are bitten, wash the wound thoroughly, control any bleeding, and seek immediate medical attention. Notify your POC about the incident as soon as you are safe.



YOU'RE MAKING US BLUSH KUDOS

TO:

kudos@flaggerforce.com

SUBJECT:

KUDOS!

SEND

We make it easy to show your appreciation! Email your acknowledgements to **kudos@flaggerforce.com**

**Keshia Leblanc** is a treasure! She responds within minutes when I send my request for flagging services. She is always a pleasure to work with. – Donna Miller (BGE)

**Ronald Brooks** is one of the best employees you have. I am always impressed by his extensive knowledge and love to see him on our sites. I know that when Ron is out there, the job gets done. – Steve Conan (Delmont Utilities)

I was extremely happy with the performance and the level of safety that **Tavon Ross** and **Nikia Davis** provided while setting up our Work Zone today. – John Grummer (BGE Foreman)

Thank you for your awesome support on this project. We successfully completed all the wire pulls on a Saturday. The crew consisted of **Anthony Singleton, Anthony Harris, Kim Abbott, George Parker, Walt Thomas, and Jerell Brown.** – Daniel DiAddezio (PECO Manager)

I call Flagger Force on a weekly basis to make flagging arrangements. On many occasions, **Melissa Stark** is the representative who takes my call. I cannot express enough the high level of service she provides each and every time. She is consistently very professional, helpful, and positive. Melissa uses all the best practices of customer service, including excellent three part communication. I always leave the call with a strong inner assurance my flagging needs will be in order for the situation requested. All of your call representatives far exceed today's norm for service. – Jonathan Hall (PPL Operations Distribution Scheduling)

**Jason Hess** and **Amber Gottshall** have been doing an awesome job today. They are very client friendly and do a great job at setting up the Work Zones. – Allen Deible (IB Abel)

Today was my first time working with **Brianna Nordsick**, and I was impressed at how hard of a worker she is. She was very helpful and a great leader! – Bill Lacerenza (Flagger Force, crew member)

We would like to take the opportunity to thank **Krista Ashby** for all the extra time and effort she spent with us testing a new version of our dispatch software. We couldn't have done it without Krista! Her efforts have directly impacted the success of this important software update and allowed for a much more seamless deployment process. Huge thank you! – Glen Lehman & Stephen Weihrauch (Flagger Force Technology Team Members)

**Donald Peaton, Sean McQueen,** and **Reginald Cooper Jr.** did an excellent job at helping us complete our work in a safe manner today. – Tom (Insituform Foreman)

The hospital greatly appreciates the excellent services of **Crystal Horvath, Edward Stokarski,** and **Ronnie Rainier** today. We want to do everything we can to be a greater partner with Flagger Force and we look forward to the next time using Flagger Force. – John Talijan (Saint Luke's Hospital)

**Susan Conner** and **Andrew Poorman** did an excellent job today. I would welcome them on any of our job sites again. – Chris Rice (PPL Foreman)

**Charles Prunty, Paul Hawkins, Nicholas Genini, Benjamin Day,** and **Triwanna Commodore** are a great field crew and we are really happy with their performance controlling traffic. – Rodney Young (Verizon Foreman)

I want to say thank you to everyone who has stuck with us and made the long haul in an effort to share our resources with Harrisburg and Baltimore markets. It is very difficult for me to name everyone, however, I do want to recognize the following people: **Galen Hoffman, Porsha Williams, Edwin Arroyo, Karen Leake, Jessica Gable, Russell Orr, Mark Kirk, James A Miller, David Johnson,** and **John Pendleton.** These leaders did not hesitate to accept their assignments and early bedtimes to assist where they were needed. Thank you! I also want to thank my operations team at KOP – you are all the best of the best! – Jeshima Devine (Flagger Force Operations–Specialist)

**Joseph Cilento** moves very fast and efficiently. His hard work does not go unnoticed. He has a great attitude and will become a great Crew Leader/Advanced Crew Leader someday. – Mark Coombs (Flagger Force Crew Leader)

I thoroughly enjoyed working with **Andrew Huntley** and **Steven Grauel.** I would love to have them back on site anytime. – Jesse Kuhn (H&H General Excavating)

The crew consisting of **Henry Gray** and **Amber Steffie** do an exceptional job. They continually set up their work zones correctly, safely, and in a timely manner. It is a pleasure working with them. They consistently make an effort to ensure that our linemen as well as Flagger Force employees are safe. – Jay Timmons (IB Abel Foreman)

I was very pleased with **Samuel Smith** and **Steven Grauel** today. The crew set up job site to the exact specifications of Pre-Construction meeting that we had. Thank you. – Kyle Thompson (Verizon Foreman)

**David Russ, Toni Gerver,** and **William Lacerenza** had good communication throughout the day which led to great traffic control. – Chad Smith (UGI Foreman)

**Daniel Walker, Phillip Brown,** and **Edward Wilburn** were very professional and did an excellent job today. I am very pleased with the service I received and am thankful I chose Flagger Force to perform our Temporary Traffic Control. – Brendon Fogarty (Altamar Enterprises Foreman)

The crew of **Jason Duda, Sara Meyers,** and **Jamie Mitten** performed an excellent Lane Closure today. Maryland SHA complimented them on how well they executed the Lane Closure. – Larry Murray (Matrix SME Foreman)

**Donetae McKinnon, Ryan Hannings, Stephvonn Shipp Washington,** and **Delica Moore** were very nice and professional on the job today. – Shawn Gonda (Comcast Foreman)

**Dave Champion, Patty Bealer, Joe Hoole, Robert McConahy, Conall McGinley, Aaron Sienicki, Amber Steffie,** and **Norman Howell** worked well as a team; they did a fantastic job at setting up and maintain a safe work zone today. – Rusty Miller (IB Abel Foreman)

I recently had the opportunity to observe the work of Flagger Force at a Linglestown Road project. Traffic flowed smoothly and I felt safe in spite of the confusing traffic patterns. Several weeks later, I was going thru a sewer pipe install on the same road, only this time Flagger Force was not present. It looked like the contractor was trying to direct traffic using their own people. What a mess! In a short span of time I witnessed three near accidents due to the lack of coordination of side street traffic with the main road traffic. I did not feel safe going thru this work zone. Flagger Force, keep up the good work! – Mark Pulaski (Corner Stone Advisors Principal)

We completed our job today and thanks to Flagger Force, our traffic control went very smoothly. **Joshua Tober** and **Amy Lloyd** were professional, punctual, and knowledgeable. It was a pleasure working with Flagger Force and if I need temporary traffic control again I know who to call. – Jeff Beard (Red Lion Municipal)



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Want to receive this via email?  
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## Referral Program

Do you know someone who might like to work for Flagger Force? If you refer someone for a position and they get hired, you are eligible to receive a \$25 Flagger Force Gear Card. If the person you referred stays on six months with the company, you are eligible to receive a \$50 Flagger Force Gear Card.

The Gear Cards can be used to buy Flagger Force branded items such as fleece vests, ball caps, and polo shirts. You can visit the online gear store by going to **FlaggerForce.com** and clicking on the **"Gear Store"** tab at the top of the page.

