The goal of ramp meters is to increase the efficiency of the entire freeway corridor by shortening peak commute periods, increasing speeds and reducing collisions.

So, next time you're running out the door five minutes late for work, please remember that without ramp meters, it could end up being much worse.

For more information on ramp meters and other transportation projects and programs, please go to the Caltrans web page at dot.ca.gov/dist11 or phone (619) 688-6670.

For Real-Time
Traffic Information
Go To: dot.ca.gov/sdtraffic

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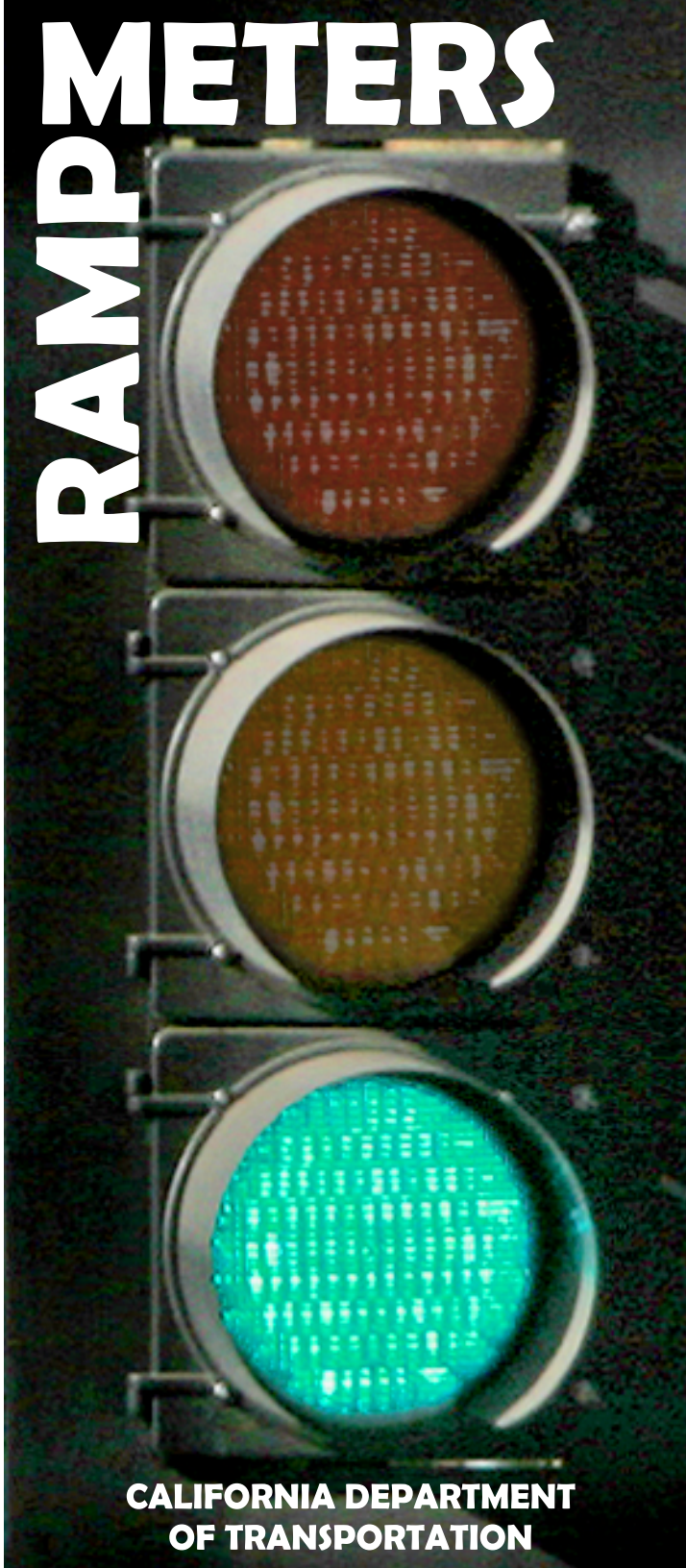
Caltrans

RAMP METERS



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

As you're running out the door already five minutes behind schedule, waiting your turn at a freeway ramp meter may be the last thing you want to do on your drive to work. But the reality is that without this traffic management tool, your commute would likely take a lot longer.

Ramp meters are turned on before traffic is at its worst. They process traffic volume and speed information gathered at different locations along the freeway and then regulate the flow of vehicles onto the main lanes. Not only does this effectively reduce traffic congestion downstream from the ramp, but it reduces the competition for openings on the already-crowded freeway.

Homes, businesses and environmental concerns are just a few of the challenges preventing the construction of more lanes to take care of our short-term traffic issues throughout the region. Ramp meters are a low-cost solution to optimize our freeways.

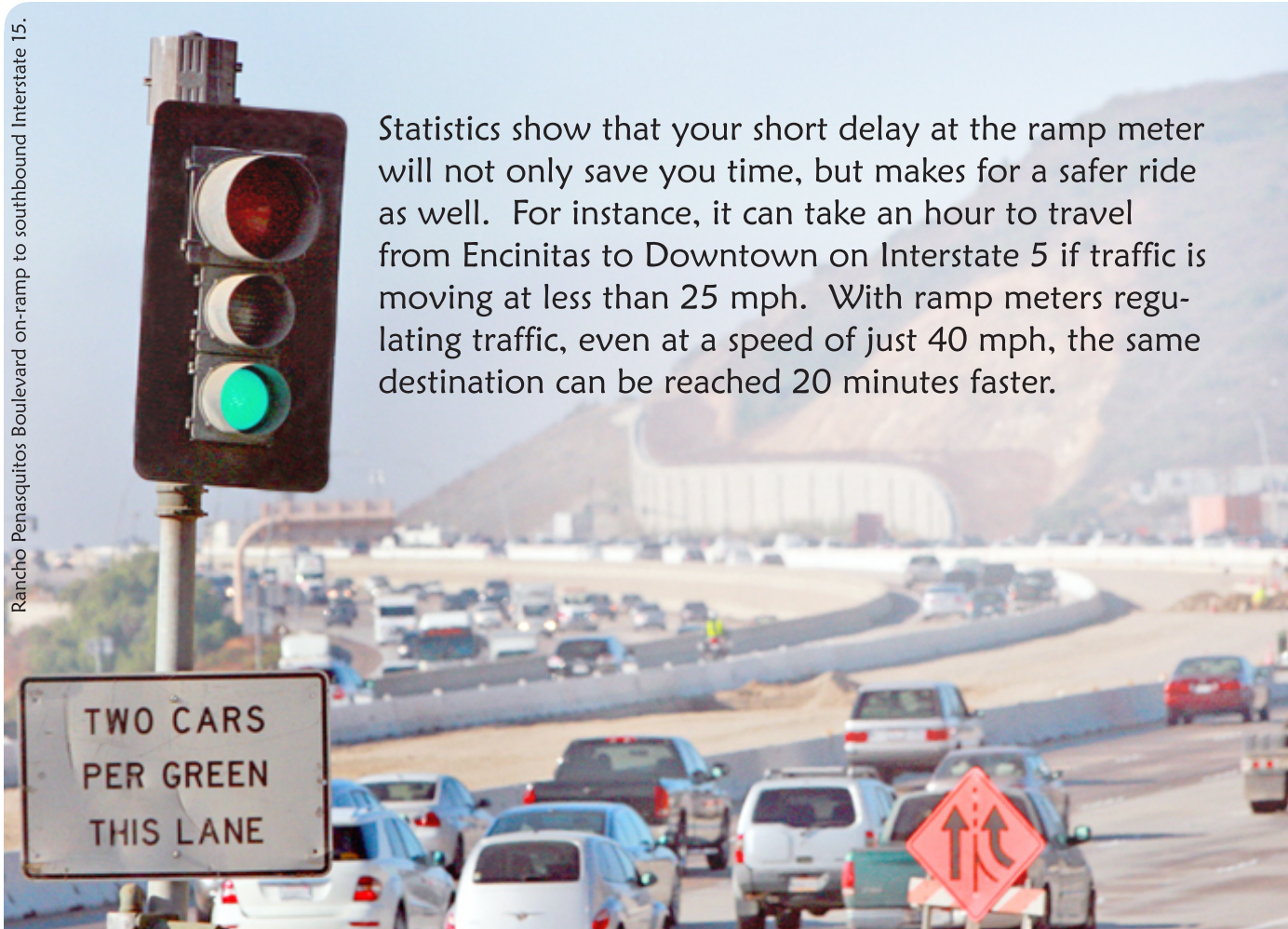
Motorists in the region spend an average of an hour a day on the road. Although our freeways account for a small percentage of the local road network, they carry the majority of all vehicle miles.

Ramp meters were introduced in the United States in the early 1960s, and to the San Diego Region in the mid-1980s. You can find them in just about every major metropolitan city throughout the world.

Stop Then Go Improves The Flow!

The concept is simple – traffic signals at the end of the on-ramp keep large volumes of vehicles from entering the freeway all at once and pushing it past its designed capacity. Once the freeway reaches capacity it results in slow-and-go, bumper-to-bumper total traffic gridlock, and no one wants that.

Under normal circumstances, the longest you may have to wait your turn at the ramp meter is just a few minutes. Some ramp meters allow two cars per green to enter the freeway while others permit just one, so be sure to read the signs to find out which applies to you.



Rancho Penasquitos Boulevard on-ramp to southbound Interstate 15.

Statistics show that your short delay at the ramp meter will not only save you time, but makes for a safer ride as well. For instance, it can take an hour to travel from Encinitas to Downtown on Interstate 5 if traffic is moving at less than 25 mph. With ramp meters regulating traffic, even at a speed of just 40 mph, the same destination can be reached 20 minutes faster.