



A Guide for Addressing Head-On Collisions

One of a Series of Guidelines to Help States Improve Highway Safety

Head-On Crashes Kill 5,200 Every Year

About one in five non-intersection fatal crashes involves two vehicles crashing head-on. Of these, 75 percent occur on rural roads and 75 percent on undivided two-lane roads. For all roads, one-third of head-on crashes involve vehicles “negotiating a curve” and two-thirds are related to vehicles “going straight.”

Most head-on crashes are likely to result from a motorist making an “unintentional” maneuver—the driver falls asleep, is distracted, or travels too fast in a curve. Contributing factors may include speed and alcohol use.

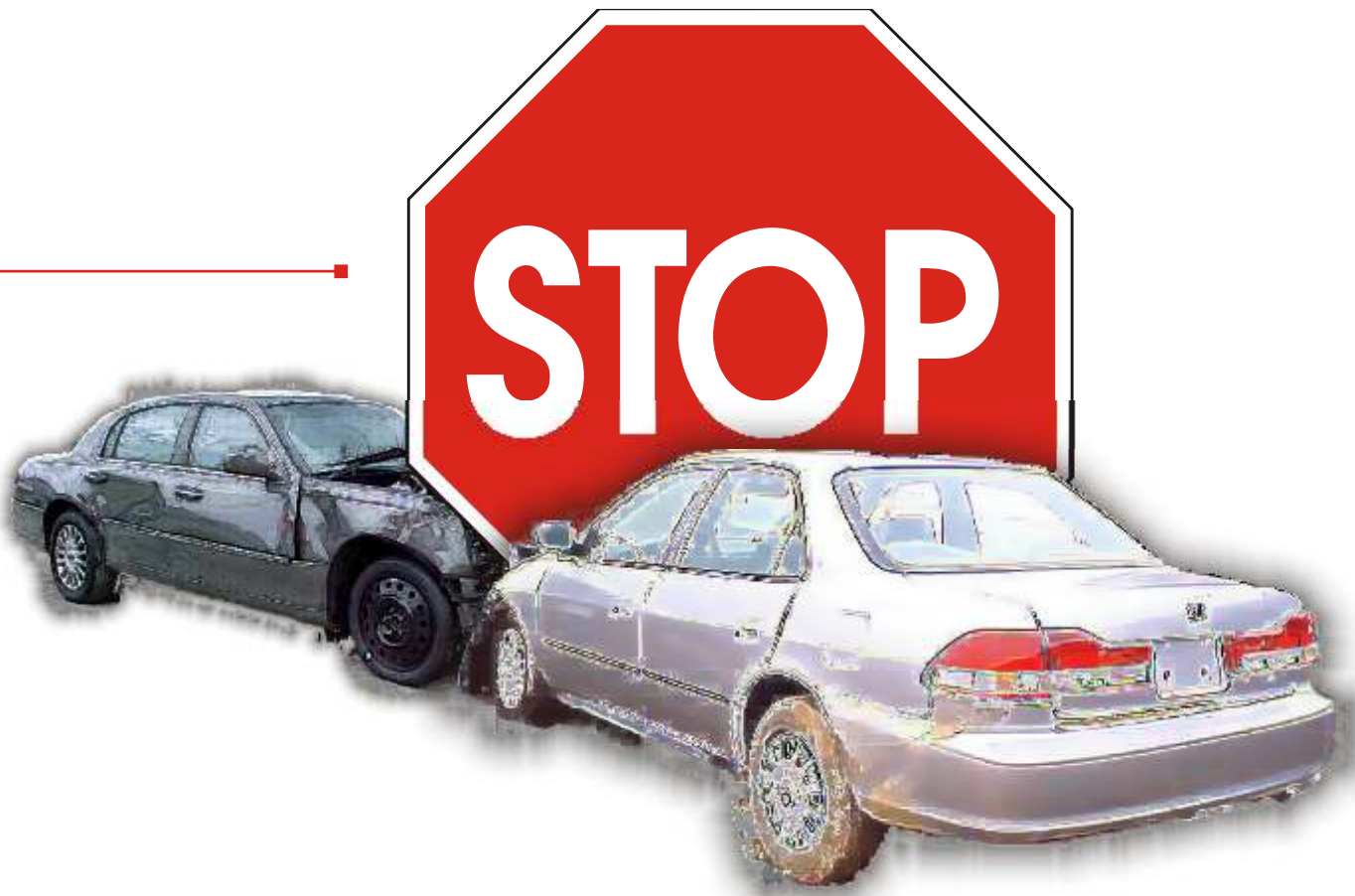
Representative Countermeasures

- ✓ **Keep vehicles from encroaching into opposite lane:** Install centerline rumble strips on two-lane roads; install profiled thermoplastic strips for centerlines; provide wider cross sections on two-lane roads; provide center two-way left-turn lanes on four- and two-lane roads; and reallocate total two-lane roadway width (lane and shoulder) to include a narrow “buffer median.”
- ✓ **Minimize the likelihood of crashing into an oncoming vehicle:** Use passing lanes or four-lane sections at key locations, and install median barriers for narrow-width medians on multilane roads.

How the Implementation Guide Helps You

The guide lists practical countermeasure strategies, categorized by relative cost to implement. Many of these strategies have been formally evaluated to demonstrate





effectiveness. Other strategies lack formal evaluation, but have been implemented with promising results.

The guide lays out the technical attributes of each countermeasure strategy in detail: target audience, expected effectiveness, keys to success, potential difficulties, appropriate measures and data, and associated need for support services.

The guide reveals organizational, institutional, and policy issues; issues affecting implementation time; costs involved; training and other personnel needs; and legislative needs (if any).

Web Based Support for More Information

Backing up the guide is a series of Appendices and Exhibits developed specifically to provide in-depth information useful to anyone implementing this part of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, together with a collection of general Knowledge Sharing documents providing background, data and information of significant value to state and local implementers.

The Strategic Highway Safety Plan was developed to assist states in their efforts to improve highway safety. Copies of the Plan, the Implementation Guides, the Integrated Safety Management System, The Self-Assessment tool, and related documents may be obtained on the Internet at safety.transportation.org.



Printed copies of the guides can be obtained from:
Transportation Research Board

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Implementing the AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan

