



# LIFELINES

Vol. 1, No. 3 September 2004

## Implementing a Strategic Highway Safety Plan

### Newly Published Guides Offer More Strategies and Countermeasures

Looking for new or different strategies to attack a particular highway safety problem?

Seven new guidance documents have been added to NCHRP's Report 500 series, bringing to 13 the number of guides now available.

Each of the Guides provides detailed information on strategies that can be useful in reducing crashes and injuries in one of the specific emphasis areas identified in the AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

In addition to the printed Guides, excellent emphasis area-specific supporting materials are available online.

All the materials are aimed at helping states contribute to the national goal of reducing the highway fatality rate to not more than 1.0 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

The latest additions include guides dealing with reducing collisions involving:

- Horizontal Curves
- Utility Poles
- Older Drivers
- Pedestrians
- Signalized Intersections
- Heavy Trucks, and
- Increasing Seat Belt Use.

Later this fall, an implementation guide addressing alcohol-related crashes will be published.

In addition to the Report 500 series, NCHRP has issued Report 501, which details a model Integrated Safety Management Process for developing a comprehensive plan for reducing fatalities statewide.

### Publication of 7 New Implementation Guides Triggers Round 2 of 'Lead States' Effort

It's time to begin thinking about which of the new emphasis area guides will benefit your state most. States soon will be invited to become "lead states" to pilot test the second wave of guidance documents that were released this summer as part of the NCHRP Report 500 series.

The goal of the lead state initiative is to demonstrate that states can take the guidance documents and with an acceptable level of existing staff resources develop a strategic action plan that, if implemented, can substantially reduce statewide deaths and injuries cost effectively and in a manner that the vast majority of the public will support for a particular emphasis area.

"Developing comprehensive strategic plans in emphasis areas where there is significant potential for saving lives is a crucial first step in achieving by 2008 a national highway fatality rate that is no higher than 1.0 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled," says AASHTO's Tony Kane.

Financial assistance is available to lead states. The NCHRP 17-18 project will provide travel and per diem for state representatives to participate in national

#### New 'Tools of Life'

#### Guides to Implementing AASHTO Strategic Plan Are Now Available

Guides addressing the following emphasis areas are available in print and electronic formats:

- Aggressive Driving
- Head-on Collisions
- Run off the Road
- Trees
- Unlicensed/Suspended/Revoked Drivers
- Unsignalized Intersections
- Horizontal Curves
- Utility Poles
- Older Drivers
- Pedestrians
- Seat Belt Use
- Signalized Intersections
- Heavy Trucks

Also available:

- Integrated Safety Management Process

A guide addressing Alcohol Related Crashes will be released in late 2004.

Guides to be published next year include those addressing Motorcyclists, Work Zones, Rural Emergency Management Services, Distracted/Fatigued Drivers, Head-On Crashes on Freeways, Young Drivers, and Bicyclists.

To order printed copies:

Transportation Research Board  
National Cooperative  
Highway Research Program  
500 Fifth St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001-2721  
Telephone: 202-334-3213

To review a guides online, go to:  
[safety.transportation.org](http://safety.transportation.org).



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# Strategic Highway Safety Planning Focus of October Peer Exchanges

A second national peer-to-peer exchange workshop will be conducted Oct. 19-20 for the States that are developing strategic highway safety plans. The session will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel-Overland Park at Corporate Woods, near Kansas City.

Funds have been made available through NCHRP Project 17-18 to cover the travel and per diem costs for two representatives from each state that participates. AASHTO has sent invitations to DOTs and Governors Highway Safety Representatives in states currently developing strategic highway safety plans.

The purpose of the workshop is to discuss the status of the States' efforts to develop their plans, the problems encountered, steps to overcome the problems, and their next steps to complete and implement the plans.

The workshop will include general sessions and breakout groups. The bulk of the workshop will be devoted to the breakout groups, allowing the state representatives ample opportunity to exchange information on the significant problems and challenges and how to overcome obstacles in developing their strategic highway safety plans.

Earlier this year a similar peer exchange session received high marks from participants, who particularly valued the "lessons learned" from other states' experiences.

Emphasis is being placed on comprehensive statewide plans developed with input from agencies representing engineering, driver behavior, law enforcement, education, and emergency services that play key roles in improving highway safety and whose efforts need to be integrated to improve safety and reduce costs.

In December 2003, 29 states participated in an orientation meeting to review the integrated safety management process developed under NCHRP Project 17-18(5) and to discuss the development of comprehensive state strategic highway safety plans.

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## Lead States: Round 2

—continued from page 1

orientation and two peer-to-peer exchanges that will be scheduled in the year ahead.

Another benefit is the technical assistance that will be available to lead states from the emphasis area managers who developed the guidance documents.

"The bottom line is that participation in this initiative will allow states to determine what it will take, using the most up-to-date knowledge and research findings, to substantially reduce deaths and injuries in the emphasis areas chosen by a state," Kane adds.

Thirty-one lead states are currently in the process of developing strategic plans based on the first wave of comprehensive emphasis area documents that were developed under the NCHRP program



## Evaluating Low Cost Safety Strategies

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has initiated a "Low Cost Safety Improvements" Pooled Funds Study to develop reliable estimates of the effectiveness of safety improvements identified as key strategies in the NCHRP Report 500 Guidebooks.

The multi-year project will evaluate up to 24 strategies selected by a steering committee that will include representatives of pooled fund state DOTs participating in the effort.

The safety effectiveness of many of the strategies in the Report 500 Guidebooks has not yet been rigorously evaluated; approximately 80 percent of the strategies are considered "tried" or "experimental" (e.g., not "proven").

In the new study, scientifically rigorous before-and-after evaluations will be performed in states where the strategies are being implemented. Data will be gathered and evaluated to determine the strategies' effectiveness in reducing the number and severity of crashes.

The greater the number of States that implement the strategies, the faster the study will be able to collect and evaluate data. This pooled fund project is open to all states.

The minimum target amount of funding requested by the participating states is \$30,000 to \$50,000 per year for three years. The FHWA will contribute \$1.5 million and additional funds will be solicited from other sources. For more information or to sign up, please visit:

<http://www.pooledfund.org/projectdetails.asp?id=884&status=1>

# Kentucky: Using ISMP to Address Critical Problem

By *BOYD T. SIGLER*  
Highway Safety Operations Manager

Last year was the deadliest year in 30 years for motor vehicle collisions in Kentucky. Records show that highway crashes claimed 931 lives. Fatal collisions ran the gamut from speed and alcohol to lack of seatbelt use to lane departures and colliding with fixed objects.

When we assessed our situation, it was clear that a broader, coordinated approach to reducing crashes could yield benefits. We chose to address our highway fatality epidemic problem using an Integrated Safety Management Process.

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, under the direction of "safety champions" Secretary Maxwell Bailey and Deputy Secretary Richard Murgatroyd, Highway Commissioner Marc Williams, State Highway Engineer J. M. Yowell, Acting Executive Director of Intermodal Programs Chuck Knowles and Acting Director of Traffic Operations Duane Thomas, became the lead agency in coordinating these efforts.

Cabinet employees attended the lead state and ISMP efforts in Washington and began the process of putting together a broad based Highway Safety Management Executive Committee, selecting an Operations Manager, and through the data-driven process, began to identify targeted emphasis areas.



The committee comprises a variety of agencies representing engineering, driver behavior, law enforcement, education, and emergency services.

Lane departures are a significant problem, especially on rural roads. The Cabinet put together a multi-disciplinary team to address these on a statewide basis and is reviewing the NCHRP Report 500 Guides for strategies to reduce these collision types.

Another use of the data identified "Drive Smart" Safety Corridors in each of our 12 highway districts. Corridor safety teams representing engineering, enforcement, emergency response and education are involved in a cooperative effort to reduce fatalities and injuries along these corridors.

An expansion of this process identified entire counties that have abnormally high fatal and injury collision rates. County Traffic Safety Teams were initiated to deal with these specific collision problems.

The Cabinet's Traffic Safety Data Service is responsible for analysis of all the data ranging from collisions to information collected on observational seatbelt surveys. The Cabinet commissioned the Regional Area Development Districts to conduct seatbelt surveys in each of the state's 120 counties.

This information combined with collision and citation data was critical in determining the emphasis areas and specific needs along Kentucky's roadways. When low-cost improvements are completed the Traffic Safety Data Service will also provide before-and-after studies to identify the effectiveness of the improvements.

The safety management process has just started in Kentucky but preliminary results indicate that the cooperative process can be very effective. A six-month review of one of our county projects, begun in January 2004, indicates a 100 percent reduction in fatalities and a 55 percent reduction in injuries compared to the previous three years for the same time period.

## Want More Information?

Detailed information about the AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan and the 'Tools for Life' that have been created to facilitate its implementation is available in electronic form via the Internet, and in printed format through the Transportation Research Board's bookroom.

For copies of the plan itself, the implementation guides currently developed, and the Integrated Safety Management Plan, visit AASHTO's web site:

<http://safety.transportation.org>

Copies of the guides (the Report 500 series) and the ISMP (Report 501) are available on the TRB web site:

<http://www4.nas.edu/trb/onlinepubs.nsf>

For printed copies of the guides and ISMP, make your request to:

**Transportation Research Board**  
National Cooperative Highway Research Program  
500 Fifth St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001-2721  
Telephone: 202-334-3213

# Road Fatality Rate Reaches All-Time Low in 2003

The fatality rate on the nation's highways declined to 1.48 in 2003, the lowest since record keeping began 29 years ago, U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta reported last month. The number of crash-related injuries also dropped to a historic low in 2003.

"The decreasing number of traffic fatalities and record low death rate on our roads shows that we are headed down the right road – one that leads to a safer America," said Mineta.

A total of 42,643 people died, and 2.89 million were injured in 2003. The fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) was 1.51 in 2002. In 2002, there were 43,005 people killed and 2.93 million injured. In 2003, VMT increased to 2.88 trillion, up from 2.86 trillion in 2002, according to the DOT's Federal Highway Administration.

"Much of the credit goes to the committed professionals in the states and communities who implement the programs, and to safety professionals in the automotive industry who offer safer vehicles," said NHTSA Administrator Jeffrey Runge, M.D.

Alcohol-related fatalities also dropped significantly in 2003, the first such decline since 1999, as more states adopted laws that allowed them to prosecute drivers at .08 blood alcohol content (BAC) and above. 2004 marks the first year that .08 BAC laws have been enacted in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

NHTSA earlier estimated that highway crashes cost society more than \$230 billion a year, about \$820 per person.

## Number of Persons Killed in Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes By State

State	2002	2003	% Change	State	2002	2003	% Change
Alabama	1,038	1,001	-3.6%	Montana	269	262	-2.6%
Alaska	89	95	+6.7%	Nebraska	307	293	-4.6%
Arizona	1,132	1,120	-1.1%	Nevada	381	368	-3.4%
Arkansas	640	627	-2.0%	New Hampshire	127	127	0%
California	4,088	4,215	+3.1%	New Jersey	771	747	-3.1%
Colorado	743	632	-15.0%	New Mexico	449	439	-2.2%
Connecticut	325	294	-10.0%	New York	1,530	1,491	-2.5%
Delaware	124	142	+15.0%	North Carolina	1,576	1,531	-2.9%
Dist. of Columbia	47	67	+43.0%	North Dakota	97	105	+8.2%
Florida	3,136	3,169	+1.1%	Ohio	1,418	1,277	-10%
Georgia	1,524	1,603	+5.2%	Oklahoma	739	668	-10%
Hawaii	119	135	+13.0%	Oregon	436	512	+17%
Idaho	264	293	+11.0%	Pennsylvania	1,614	1,577	-2.3%
Illinois	1,420	1,453	+2.3%	Rhode Island	84	104	+24%
Indiana	792	834	+5.3%	South Carolina	1,053	968	-8.1%
Iowa	405	441	+8.9%	South Dakota	180	203	+13%
Kansas	507	471	-7.1%	Tennessee	1,177	1,193	+1.4%
Kentucky	915	928	+1.4%	Texas	3,823	3,675	-3.9%
Louisiana	907	894	-1.4%	Utah	328	309	-5.8%
Maine	216	207	-4.2%	Vermont	78	69	-12%
Maryland	661	649	-1.8%	Virginia	914	943	+3.2%
Massachusetts	459	462	+0.7%	Washington	658	600	-8.8%
Michigan	1,277	1,283	+0.5%	West Virginia	439	394	-10%
Minnesota	657	657	0%	Wisconsin	803	848	+5.6%
Mississippi	885	871	-1.6%	Wyoming	176	165	-6.3%
Missouri	1,208	1,232	+2.0%	<b>National Total</b>	<b>43,005</b>	<b>42,643</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>

## Highlights

NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) also shows that between 2002 and 2003:

- Motorcyclist fatalities increased 12 percent
- Rollover deaths among passenger vehicle occupants declined 3.3 percent. Sport utility vehicle (SUV) rollover fatalities increased 6.8 percent, even as SUV registrations increased 11 percent. Rollovers declined in passenger cars (7.5 percent) and pickup trucks (6.8 percent).
- Twenty-seven states had decreases in the total number of fatalities. The highest percentage decreases were in Colorado (-15 percent); Vermont (-12 percent); Connecticut (-10 percent); Ohio (-10 percent); Oklahoma (-10 percent); and West Virginia (-10 percent). The highest percentage increases were in the District of Columbia (+43 percent); Rhode Island (+24 percent) and Oregon (+17 percent).
- Passenger vehicle occupant fatalities dropped to 31,904 – the largest decrease since 1992.
- Passenger vehicle fatality rates per 100,000 registered vehicles declined for all passenger vehicle types except vans.
- Pedestrian deaths declined 2.1 percent.
- Fatalities in large truck crashes increased slightly from 4,939 to 4,986.
- In 2003, there was a decline in the number of unbelted fatalities, reflecting an increase in safety belt use. Still, 56 percent of those killed in passenger vehicles were not wearing safety belts. This underscores the need for states to adopt primary safety belt laws.

Summaries of the 2003 report are available on the NHTSA web site at: [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)