

TOWARD ZERO DEATHS: EMPHASIS AREAS



We can help you reduce the number of traffic fatalities on our roadways, no matter how you're striving to move our nation Toward Zero Deaths (TZD). The TZD National Strategy on Highway Safety focuses on six key emphasis areas.

Safer Drivers and Passengers
Safer Vulnerable Users

Safer Vehicles
Safer Infrastructure

Enhanced Emergency Medical Services
Improved Safety Management

For more information, download the National Strategy document (TowardZeroDeaths.org/strategy).



SAFER DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS

- Studies show that 94 percent of crashes are a direct result of driver error.¹ Of all the risky behaviors that drivers and passengers demonstrate, the three most prevalent are being unbuckled, alcohol-impaired driving and speeding. Using handheld devices while driving (e.g. texting) has become a rising concern in recent years. Other significant driver safety issues are related to age, specifically younger or novice drivers and older drivers.
- Changing road user behavior is difficult and involves different but coordinated approaches: educating drivers on appropriate behaviors, requiring or prohibiting specific behaviors, warning drivers when their behavior may result in a crash or injury and intervening to counteract or prevent the specific behavior.
- Behavior change efforts are most effective when combined with new and stronger traffic safety laws, along with targeted enforcement of the laws, technology, driver education programs and public information campaigns.



SAFER VULNERABLE USERS

- There are road users who, because they lack the physical protection of a vehicle, are more susceptible to severe injury or death when involved in a traffic crash—such as pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists. Other individuals whose work takes place on the roadway—construction and maintenance workers, emergency medical personnel, incident responders and law enforcement—also lack protection and face serious risk of being struck by a vehicle while on the job.
- Successfully protecting vulnerable road users relies on a combination of improving infrastructure and planning, enacting and enforcing legislation and targeting education programs to specific road user audiences.



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National Strategy on Highway Safety

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SAFER VEHICLES

- While vehicles are rarely the sole cause of fatal crashes, they do provide opportunities for protecting occupants. Vehicle technologies help prevent crashes and lessen the severity of crashes that do occur. It is important to alert drivers to risks and assist drivers who are at risk of crashing, protect vehicle occupants during crashes, enable intercommunication between vehicles and the roadway and ensure that vehicles continue to perform as designed.
- Communicating the benefits of vehicle safety features to consumers will increase the rate at which the features become common throughout the vehicle population.



SAFER INFRASTRUCTURE

- Any changes to the roadway environment must consider two elements—vehicles and road users—and how they will interact with the roadway once it has been changed.
- An obvious step is to upgrade existing infrastructure to the best standards to help mitigate crashes and reduce their severity. It will also be important to adopt advanced cross-cutting technologies and improve design practices so that safety is a key component. In fact, we recommend that agency policies and procedures incorporate safety considerations throughout the entire highway project development process.



ENHANCED EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

- Emergency Medical Service is the partner in the comprehensive safety management system that provides the last opportunity to stabilize or even save the life of a person injured in a crash and is therefore integral to reaching the TZD vision. We must focus on the technologies and systems necessary to advance collaboration with all safety partners—and to save lives.
- This starts with improving our incident detection, 911 access and enhancing 911 system capabilities. Doing so will allow for faster and more accurate response times. We must also improve on-scene medical care and transport to hospitals. For cases of extreme emergencies, we need to improve access to higher-level trauma centers. Lastly, it is imperative that all responding agencies have the necessary multidisciplinary training and equipment to cooperate, communicate and ensure that victims are evaluated, stabilized and transported quickly.



IMPROVED SAFETY MANAGEMENT

- This area focuses on the challenges common to all key highway safety areas, including: broader issues related to how safety stakeholder partners collaborate to develop and implement appropriate safety initiatives; the finer points of collecting, using, linking and maintaining accurate traffic safety crash data and systems; and providing for a knowledgeable safety workforce.

¹(<https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812115>)