

News & Updates

 **The North Carolina Executive Committee for Highway Safety** September 2004

Formation of the Committee

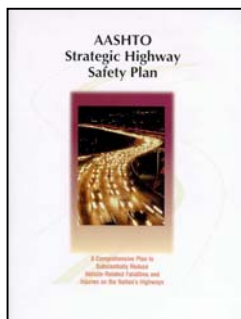
While major strides and enhancements have been made in the areas of highway safety within North Carolina, there is still much room for improvement. In 2003, there were 231,247 reported traffic crashes that resulted in 1,552 persons killed and over 134,000 injuries on our highways. Although it will be impossible to prevent all traffic crashes, North Carolina must continue to seek plausible avenues by which to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries on our state's highways.

After nearly ten (10) months of behind the scenes work, in an effort to coordinate the many safety initiatives both within and outside of the Department of Transportation, with an emphasis on efficiency of resources and the prioritization of programs, the N.C. Executive Committee for Highway Safety (ECHS) was formed and held its first meeting in April 2003.

The ECHS is comprised of representatives from top management of selected disciplines involved in highway safety who control the current and potentially available resources for utilization in safety efforts. The ECHS strives to identify, prioritize, promote and support all emphasis areas in the AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) as well as emphasis areas not included in the AASHTO Plan for the coordinated North Carolina highway safety effort to save lives and reduce injuries.

AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan

In 1997, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Standing Committee for Highway Traffic Safety, along with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Transportation Research Board Committee on Transportation Safety assembled a group of national safety experts in driver, vehicle and highway issues from various organizations. The specific purpose of this group was to develop a strategic plan that would impact the nation's present and predicted statistics on vehicle-related deaths and injuries. The end result was the AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) which focuses on 22 key emphasis areas and contains strategies designed to improve each area's major problem areas or to advance effective practices by means



that are both cost-effective and acceptable to a significant majority of Americans.

The AASHTO SHSP divides the 22 key emphasis areas into six major categories: *Drivers, Special Users, Vehicles, Highways, Emergency Medical Services and Management*. A review of the key emphasis areas shows that with a few exceptions, all of these are directly applicable to North Carolina's needs as revealed by preliminary analysis of historical crash data.

Why Have a SHSP?

- IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO!
- The number of crashes, injuries and fatalities on North Carolina's streets and highways continue to increase. North Carolina was 4th nationally in highway fatalities in 2000, with 1,563 fatalities.
- Vehicle miles of travel are greatly exceeding lane mile growth, facility capacity and maintenance capabilities resulting in highway safety issues.
- The FHWA, AASHTO, NHTSA and FMCSA have all established national goals to reduce the number of fatalities on our streets and highways. These goals also include reducing the number and severity of crashes.
- Highway safety for the traveling public, our highway workers, emergency responders and law enforcement personnel is a top priority for NCDOT.
- Transportation re-authorization proposals include requirements for a Strategic Highway Safety Plan that targets a "Significant and Sustainable" reduction in fatalities (AASHTO \$1 Billion Eligibility).

Organizational Structure



Executive Committee for Highway Safety

- ◆ Comprised of 25 representatives from top management of selected disciplines involved in highway safety who control the current and potentially available resources for utilization in safety efforts.
- ◆ Meets on a quarterly basis.
- ◆ Responsible for the overall direction and administration of all SHSP activities.
- ◆ Responsible for defining high priority issues.
- ◆ Coordinate the Department's many safety efforts with an emphasis on efficiency of resources and the prioritization of programs.
- ◆ Identify, prioritize, promote and support all emphasis areas in the AASHTO Plan as well as emphasis areas not included in the AASHTO Plan for the coordinated highway safety effort to save lives and reduce injuries.
- ◆ Review and approve all actions submitted by the Working Groups and appropriate funds for implementation.
- ◆ Establish statewide highway safety goals and objectives.
- ◆ Review proposed highway safety legislation.
- ◆ Create mechanisms to foster multidisciplinary flows of communication.



Working Group

- ◆ Chaired by a member of the ECHS.
- ◆ Working groups are established by the ECHS to address a specific issue (typically a key emphasis area from the AASHTO SHSP) as identified by the committee.
- ◆ When possible, the working group consist of a diverse selection of representatives from state, federal and local agencies in an effort to ensure all aspects of the topic are identified and addressed.
- ◆ Meet as frequently as needed as decided by the working group. Meetings/discussion may also be conducted by conference call or e-mail.
- ◆ Responsible for analyzing the issue, determining causes/solutions and developing strategies for addressing the different contributing factors of the issue assigned to the group.
- ◆ Developed strategies utilize the NCHRP 500 report as a template.
- ◆ May establish technical working groups as needed to further investigate specific components of an issue.
- ◆ Evaluate and prioritize issues, concerns and thus strategies for submission to the Executive Committee.

Technical Work Groups

- ◆ Established as needed by the working groups to further analyze and research a given issue for the more complex topics.
- ◆ The issues and proposed solutions are submitted to the working group for review and approval prior to being sent to the Executive Committee for final approval and recommendation for implementation.

Committee Members

David King (Chair)
Deputy Secretary
NCDOT

Susan Coward (Vice-Chair)
Deputy Secretary
NCDOT

Robert Andrews, Jr., CSP
Director Safety & Loss Control
NCDOT

Debbie Barbour, P.E.
Director - Preconstruction
NCDOT

Ken Bumgarner
Retired Chief of Police
Jacksonville Police Department

Fletcher Clay
Colonel
NC State Highway Patrol

Peg Dorer
Director
NC Conference of District Attorneys

J. Douglas Galyon
Chairman, Board of Transportation
NCDOT

Herb Garrison III, MD
Director - Eastern Carolina
Injury Prevention Program

Terry Hopkins, P.E.
State Traffic Safety Engineer
NCDOT

Darrell Jernigan
Governor's Highway Safety Program
NCDOT

Kevin Lacy, P.E., CPM
State Traffic Engineer
NCDOT

Calvin Leggett, P.E.
Manager Program Development Branch
NCDOT

Axel Lluch
Director
Hispanic/Latino Affairs

Jim Long
Commissioner
NC Department of Insurance

Ashley Memory
Director - Public Information Office
NCDOT

Drexdal Pratt
Director - NC Office of
Emergency Medical Services

Doug Robertson, Ph.D., P.E.
Director
UNC Highway Safety Research Center

Len Sanderson, P.E.
State Highway Administrator
NCDOT

John Sullivan
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

George Tatum
Commissioner
NC Division of Motor Vehicles

Steve Varnedoe, P.E.
Chief Engineer - Operations
NCDOT

Jim Westmoreland, P.E.
Director of Transportation
City of Greensboro

Mike Yaniero
Chief of Police
Jacksonville Police Department

Established Working Groups

1) Lane Departure

Chaired by Steve Varnedoe

Target Crashes: Run-Off-Road, Head-On, Overturn, Fixed Object, Sideswipe (Opposite Direction)

2) Ensuring Drivers are Fully Licensed

Chaired by Commissioner George Tatum

Target Crashes: Crashes involving unlicensed, suspended or revoked drivers

3) Curbing Aggressive Driving

Chaired by Kevin Lacy

Target Crashes: Crashes involving aggressive driving

4) Increasing Seat Belt Usage

Chaired by Darrell Jernigan

Target Crashes: Crashes involving unbelted drivers and occupants



Working Group Specifics

LANE DEPARTURE

Data Highlights:

- 23% of all crashes are lane departures
- 55% of all fatalities are lane departures
- 66% of all lane departure fatalities involve only one vehicle
- 79% of lane departure fatalities occur on 2 lane roads

ENSURING DRIVERS ARE FULLY LICENSED

In General:

- 24% of all fatalities involve an unlicensed driver (1999 data)
- Two specific issues to be addressed: Drivers with suspended or revoked licenses and unlicensed drivers.
- Approximately 75% of suspended/revoked drivers continue to operate a motor vehicle.

CURBING AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

In General:

- Challenge lies in defining an “aggressive driver” . An ideal definition would consist of three components:
 - *An action that can be observed,*
 - *An action that can be substantiated and*
 - *An action that can be verified utilizing data contained within a crash or a citation database.*

INCREASING SEAT BELT USAGE

In General:

- NC has a 86%+ statewide compliance rate
- Remaining 14% have a large impact on the overall fatalities. For example::
 - *68% of all “Lane Departure” related fatalities are unbelted*
 - *74% of all “Keeping Drivers Alert” related fatalities are unbelted*
 - *70% of all “Speed” related fatalities are unbelted*

KEEPING DRIVERS ALERT

Data Highlights:

- Target crashes account for only 8% of all crashes, but account for 44% of all fatalities
- 59% of all target crashes are single vehicle crashes

SPEED

Data Highlights:

- 36% of all crashes are speed related
- 46% of all fatalities are speed related
- 66% of all speed related fatalities involve only one vehicle

AASHTO SHSP Key Emphasis Areas

PART 1: DRIVERS

1. Instituting Graduated Licensing for Young Drivers
2. Ensuring Drivers are Licensed and Fully Competent
3. Sustaining Proficiency in Older Drivers
4. Curbing Aggressive Driving
5. Reducing Impaired Driving
6. Keeping Drivers Alert
7. Increasing Driver Safety Awareness
8. Increasing Seat Belt Usage

PART 2: SPECIAL USERS

9. Making Walking and Street Crossing Safer
10. Ensuring Safer Bicycle Travel

PART 3: VEHICLES

11. Improving Motorcycle Safety and Increasing Motorcycle Awareness
12. Making Truck Travel Safer
13. Increasing Safety Enhancements in Vehicles

PART 4: HIGHWAYS

14. Reducing Vehicle-Train Crashes
15. Keeping Vehicles on the Roadway
16. Minimizing the Consequences of Leaving the Road
17. Improving the Design and Operation of Highway Intersections
18. Reducing Head-On and Across Median Crashes
19. Designing Safer Work Zones

PART 5: EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

20. Enhancing Emergency Medical Capabilities to Increase Survivability

PART 6: MANAGEMENT

21. Improving Information and Decision Support Systems
22. Creating More Effective Processes and Safety Management Systems

For More Information

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WEB SITE

<http://www.doh.dot.state.nc.us/preconstruct/traffic/echs/>