

Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Leadership that Saves Lives



Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSP) are a true success story. Since these plans were first required by legislation in 2005, traffic fatalities have dramatically declined. In fact, over the past 10 years there has been a reduction of nearly 25 percent in the number of fatalities on our Nation's roadways.¹ One of the key reasons SHSPs succeed is effective leadership. Strong leaders have drawn attention to the complex safety problems that afflict our nation's roadways. Leaders also are instrumental in establishing a statewide safety culture and turning the priorities and strategies in SHSPs into reality.

"Maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system is the goal for every State department of transportation, but we realize we cannot effectively achieve that goal on our own. That is why involvement in the SHSP is so valuable. It gives transportation agencies an opportunity to actively work with and involve safety partners from throughout the State to achieve meaningful reductions in traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries."

*Malcolm Dougherty, Director
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)*

What Can Safety Leaders Do?

Know and Promote Your Safety Priorities

Emphasis areas in the SHSP represent the most critical safety concerns within a State and are matched with strategies and action steps for eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries. This is an excellent starting point to focus leadership support. For instance, if work zone safety is an emphasis area, then a leader could champion a Work Zone Safety Week every year to bring awareness to the issue. Being visible, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic about safety issues identified in the SHSP generates and sustains continued motivation among all safety partners.

Get Your Partners Involved

Leaders should ensure there is an organization, agency, or individual who is responsible for implementing the strategies and actions in the SHSP. Keep in mind it is just as important to have the "right" person on-board as the right organization. Take time to explore who will truly be a champion and get the job done. Leaders also should make sure action plans include timelines, potential options for funding and resources, and any formal agreements that are necessary to reinforce safety stakeholders' commitment to saving lives. If one of the partners is reluctant to jump on-board, it may be necessary to meet one-on-one to explain the critical role each agency or organization plays in safety.

Keep Your Partners Energized

It is not always easy to get people involved, but it can be even harder to keep people involved and energized. It helps to maintain regular communication with partners through various communication channels (such as newsletters, web sites, meetings, emails, etc.). Take the opportunity to share the results of SHSP efforts and celebrate successes. Do not underestimate how a leader's position, personality, and prestige motivate others to join—and stay on—the journey.

¹ NHTSA (2014). 2013 Motor Vehicle Crashes: An Overview, DOT HS 812 101, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Washington, D.C., December 2014.

Organize for Success

Become a champion for the statewide safety goal by spreading the message throughout the State. For example, at the completion of an SHSP update process, leaders can hold a press conference to announce the safety goal and continue to communicate safety issues at other speaking engagements. In addition, leaders should encourage agencies and partners to incorporate elements of the SHSP into other planning documents, which ensures funding is available for implementation. As appropriate, the emphasis areas and strategies in the State's SHSP should be incorporated in the State's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Highway Safety Plan (HSP), and the Commercial Vehicle Safety Plan (CVSP), as well as long-term planning documents such as the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Maximize Resources

A leader should help identify all revenue, personnel, and technical resources available for statewide safety initiatives, and influence allocation to optimize safety benefits. By working with other safety partners, a leader is able to combine resources and technical knowledge to advance safety. There are opportunities to use State, HSIP, and other safety funds, i.e., NHTSA highway safety grants, which also can serve as incentives to attract and maintain partnerships.

Eliminate Roadblocks

Leaders are in a unique position to remove barriers and overcome institutional boundaries within and between agencies and organizations. Many States have created an SHSP Executive Committee comprised of leaders from SHSP partner agencies and organizations. Arranging for these leaders to meet—usually once or twice a year—creates buy-in and support at all levels, breaks down barriers, supports SHSP implementation, and can result in new and innovative ideas and approaches.

Leading a safety effort is a difficult task, but there are resources available to help every step of the way. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is located in every State plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Please contact them to learn how they can help.

FHWA Division Offices
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/field.html>

FHWA Office of Safety
202-366-2288
hsip@dot.gov
<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov>



Highway Safety Improvement
Program *Data Driven Decisions*

You also can visit the SHSP Community of Practice
for SHSP information and resources.

http://rspcb.safety.fhwa.dot.gov/shsp_cop.aspx

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Leadership In Action

- In Arizona, the SHSP established an executive-level partnership between seven agencies at the Director level. This Executive Committee (EC) meets regularly and provides consistent and visible support throughout the SHSP process.
- Vermont has created the Vermont Highway Safety Alliance (VHSA), which collaboratively promotes SHSP strategies to reduce crashes on Vermont's public highways through the development and support of partnerships and coalitions.
- California's SHSP Executive Leadership has identified several key policy initiatives, including promoting traffic safety culture, and increasing involvement of regional, local, and Tribal agencies.
- In Michigan, leaders from the member agencies of the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission (GTSAC) also are represented on SHSP emphasis area action teams.