

## **Guidelines for Developing a Municipal Speed Enforcement Program**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to provide step-by-step guidance to both law enforcement and civilian personnel to assist with the development of traffic safety program support committees and the implementation of municipal speed enforcement and other special traffic safety programs.

Law enforcement agencies from across the United States are attempting to improve traffic safety in their jurisdictions, by reducing the incidence of speeding and driving while impaired (DWI), and increasing compliance with safety restraint laws and other motor vehicle codes. Although important, the effects of an enforcement program will be limited unless public awareness of the enforcement can be elevated. In particular, a special general deterrence effect can result when public awareness of an enforcement effort is elevated by an effective publicity campaign. The following pages provide suggestions that can be followed to design and implement a traffic safety program composed of both enforcement and public information and education about the special enforcement.

### **Select a Focus**

The first step in the process is to select a focus for the traffic safety program. Although the general objective of improving traffic safety is laudable, the probability of a program achieving measurable success is increased if the effort is focused on a specific traffic safety issue, such as speed, safety restraint, rail road crossing or right-of-way violation, or DWI enforcement. A locally salient traffic safety issue usually precipitates interest in a special program, rather than the reverse (i.e., a program searching for an issue). If clueless, problem issues can usually be identified through a review of annual collision statistics, comparing the incidence of various categories of crashes in a community to the incidence in comparable communities in the same state. These crash data will also be used later in the program to help measure the combined effects of the special enforcement and publicity.

Municipal speed enforcement will be the traffic safety issue used as an example in this brief guide, but many of the suggestions apply to other issues as well. The following elements composed the special enforcement programs implemented by the Modesto and San Bernardino, California, Police Departments as part of a NHTSA study concerning the effects of municipal speed enforcement. Both communities experienced declines in speed-related crashes and the incidence of larceny crimes in the areas of the communities in which the special enforcement was conducted. A focused approach is suggested, but police managers are not limited to the recommended numbers of special enforcement zones.

### **Suggestions for a Municipal Speed Enforcement Program**

- Select four enforcement zones within the community by examining crash records to identify road segments and intersections that have been the sites of speed-related crashes, or where speeding is a persistent problem for motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians. The zones should be several blocks to a mile or so in length.
- Select two zones within the community that have been the sites of chronic citizen complaints about speeding. Selecting areas within a community for special enforcement on the basis of crash statistics and citizen complaints contributes to the credibility of the program.
- Deploy to the selected sites during hours of greatest crash risk or incidence, but following a weekly schedule that prevents motorists from predicting with certainty when the special enforcement will be in place.

- Use radar and, if possible, at least some laser speed monitoring equipment. There are site-specific advantages to both types of equipment, but laser devices are more newsworthy and will generate public interest and awareness of the programs. Yes, you want the public to become aware of the speed enforcement programs, contrary to the traditional law enforcement philosophy. Publicize the enforcement effort to the maximum extent possible, even if it means using innovative technologies to obtain "free press." It is even a good idea to announce on the radio in the morning where the enforcement will be later in the day (but do not permit the schedule to be so regular that it becomes predictable). The objective of the program is to reduce vehicle speeds (and indirectly, to reduce speed-related crashes). Writing citations is not the objective, but a means to increase public awareness. This theme must be incorporated in the program to ensure public acceptance of the special enforcement effort.
- Use decoy vehicles at the special enforcement sites and elsewhere in the community to contribute to motorist uncertainty and public awareness, and to generate free publicity about the enforcement programs. Parked patrol vehicles also contribute to public perceptions of safety by implying a police presence.
- Place an emphasis on speed enforcement in all routine patrols throughout the community, in addition to increased enforcement by the dedicated traffic personnel.
- The number of hours devoted to the enforcement program by dedicated traffic personnel should be substantial to maximize the probability of achieving measurable results. On average, about 200 hours per month should be devoted to the six special enforcement zones, based on study results. This works out to an average of about 8.5 officer hours per week devoted to each special enforcement zone. Doubling the average effort during the first two program months will increase the initial impact of the programs, and permit a relaxation of effort in subsequent months. Officers will notice the effects of the programs within one month, as fewer speeding vehicles are observed. It is recommended that deployment strategies remain flexible, permitting officers to shift to another zone when speeding declines greatly in an assigned location.
- The objective of the deployment strategy should be to maximize the visibility of the police presence. This is sometimes best accomplished by teaming officers, rather than working individually. Teaming involves a trade-off between duration on site and police visibility, or presence. For example, one officer can work a zone for two hours each day, four days each week and expend the same level of effort as two officers working together on only two days of the week. It is believed that greater effects might be achieved if officers spread their time on-site over more days by working individually. But, some officers prefer the team approach for tactical reasons, and certain areas within communities render a team approach a safety requirement. What ever approach is ultimately implemented, the objective should be to maximize police visibility and the perception of police presence in a special enforcement zone, while maintaining acceptable levels of officer safety.
- Officers and police managers should participate in the meetings and activities of the program support committees (e.g., providing stopping distance demonstrations and ride-along opportunities for reporters; demonstrations of the laser equipment for citizens, reporters, DAs, and judges; participating in a speakers bureau or providing TV and radio interviews, etc.).
- The police department's commitment to a vigorous enforcement program must be sustained for a period of at least six months.
- Obtain crash statistics for the special enforcement zones and compare the incidence of speed-related crashes during the program to the same months in previous years.

- Obtain statistics concerning the incidence of crime in the reporting areas encompassed by the special enforcement zones. Watch for declines in larceny and other daytime crimes.
- Modify your department's record system to permit the identification of all arrests that were made as a consequence of traffic enforcement stops. Note: This could be a monumental job, but the resulting lists of arrests will provide considerable evidence of the contributions made by traffic enforcement to the overall mission of the police department.

### **Developing a Public Information and Education Program**

Law enforcement agencies typically lack the staff and resources necessary to generate the level of public awareness needed to create a general deterrence effect. But, in most communities there are concerned citizens and civic leaders who have both the talent and resources that are required to develop and implement effective program support activities. Significant achievements can be obtained when law enforcement and civilian volunteers work together toward the common goal of improved traffic safety.

The following paragraphs describe how to plan, establish, and maintain a traffic safety program support committee to increase public understanding and awareness of traffic safety enforcement efforts by local law enforcement. In the approach described here, traffic safety program support committees become part of the general deterrence effort by increasing awareness of the enforcement program, and other traffic safety issues, within a community. Research has demonstrated that traffic safety program support committees can have significant impacts on public awareness of special speed and DWI enforcement programs and related safety issues. Further, the efforts of local program committees can increase community support for law enforcement efforts, and lead to reductions in the numbers of crashes in a community.

This "how to" appendix is designed to simplify your task by describing proven methods of committee development. You may consider this appendix a blueprint for successful committee formation and maintenance. The following topics are covered.

- Suggestions for getting organized
- Directions to develop a traffic safety implementation plan
- A strategy to recruit committee members
- Plans for the first meeting of your committee
- Examples of committee activities during the first program weeks
- Arrangements for a kick-off press conference
- Recommendations for long term committee activities and support

This appendix may be used by law enforcement managers and support personnel, or local government employees directed to organize a traffic safety support committee. It may also be used by independent citizens who wish to improve traffic safety in their area. Regardless of who uses this booklet, it is assumed that the user has no previous experience in developing traffic safety program support committees and that basic information is required to begin the project.

### **Get Organized!**

While developing your committee, you will be contacting and meeting many new people from a variety of organizations, scheduling several meetings and appointments, and preparing a wide range of materials. Unless

you are well-organized, you may soon be overwhelmed by this flood of activities. Acquire the following items to help you get organized.

- A monthly planner
- A journal
- An address book

Dedicate your new monthly planner to committee development activities. Make it a habit to review the planner once a day to prepare for upcoming events. Record committee development events and activities in your new journal. The journal may include notes from meetings and interviews, names of new people to contact, and your own ideas as the committee development process continues. Use the address book to record the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all individuals you meet during committee development. Include police personnel responsible for coordinating safety program activities, potential and existing committee members, and public or private organizations that agree (or might agree) to participate in the effort. Carry each of these items with you while performing committee development activities and make it a habit to use them! You will be amazed by the number of development tasks that you can handle if you are properly organized.

### **Develop an Implementation Plan**

"If you don't know where you're going, you may end up some where else."

A key to committee development is the creation of a plan that describes the committee's purpose, goals and member recruitment strategy. As a tool, the implementation plan:

- Allows you to intelligently (and consistently) describe the committee's mission to potential members and supporting organizations;
- Assures that committee members and affiliates work toward the same objective(s); and
- Prevents the committee from losing sight of its mission.

**The Purpose of the Committee.** The implementation plan must include a description of the committee's purpose. Essentially, the committee will exist to raise public awareness of the police department's traffic enforcement efforts; in this particular example, the objective is to increase public awareness of speed enforcement efforts and to teach the community about the hazards of driving with excessive speed. Traffic safety program support committees can also focus on the DWI countermeasure employed by local law enforcement. For example, the purpose of a committee might be to support a police department's program of sobriety checkpoints by educating citizens about checkpoint procedures, publicizing the checkpoint program, and providing volunteers to help the law enforcement agency during checkpoints. Although the focus here is on speed enforcement and the reduction of speed-related crashes, a committee can also support law enforcement efforts regarding the full range of traffic safety issues, including safety restraints, child safety seats, pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, and DWI enforcement, to name a few--the applicability of program support committees is limited only by the creativity of the participants, and the willingness of law enforcement managers to take advantage of an untapped source of support and energy. As mentioned previously, it is advisable to focus the committees efforts to obtain maximum effects, at least initially.

**Committee Objectives.** The implementation plan must also include objectives that direct the committee's activities and that may be used to evaluate the committee's success. Examples of committee objectives are listed below.

- Support police speed enforcement/deterrence methods and cooperation between the police and community by actively promoting and sustaining police efforts.
- Educate high risk groups about speeding, the special enforcement effort, and their consequences.
- Develop or participate in high-visibility events.
- Gather adequate physical and monetary resources to support committee activities.
- Recruit new members to maintain committee vitality and perspective.

**Committee Members.** The implementation plan should describe the types of committee members you want to recruit and how you will recruit them. It is important to consider individuals who are likely to support traffic safety efforts, and individuals who possess talents and capabilities that might be useful to the committee. Successful committees are often made up of the following individuals.

- Concerned citizens
- Hospital emergency room staff
- Alcohol abuse counselors
- Community leaders (elected officials or their representatives)
- Police supervisors in charge of traffic safety and enforcement issues

Also, consider recruiting members from public and private organizations that have a vested interest in various topics related to traffic safety, like the following.

Insurance companies Local employers

Bars and restaurants Parent or student organizations (MADD, SADD)

The courts Social organizations (Kiwanis, Lions, etc.)

Department of motor vehicles Emergency department physicians and nurses

Start your member search by gathering names from the police department, government agencies, and hospitals. You may be able to obtain a list of community organizations from the local chamber of commerce, and be sure to refer to the phone book for useful community information.

### **Plan the First Committee Meeting / Write Letters of Invitation**

Consider the schedules and time constraints of invited guests when arranging the first meeting. Also, select a centrally located site for the meeting that is large enough to accommodate everyone you plan to invite. Try to hold the meeting at a location that lends credibility to the committee and that is linked to the committee's objectives. You may, for example, decide to hold the meeting at police headquarters to emphasize the cooperation between the police and the community in the work that is to be accomplished.

Once a meeting site has been established, begin the recruitment process by mailing letters of invitation to potential committee members. In the letter, review the purpose and objectives of the committee. Be sure to mention the important work of the committee in supporting the police department's speeding deterrence policies and enforcement efforts. Also, place the committee's work in the larger context of traffic safety. For example, describe the committee as part of a nationwide effort to reduce the death toll on America's

highways. Personalize each letter by describing why the person has been invited. For example, mention the qualifications of the invited guest, and describe what special expertise and resources he or she will bring to the committee. Close the letter by announcing the time, date, location, and length of the first committee meeting. Also provide a brief schedule and state that refreshments will be served.

### **Follow-Up Your Letters of Invitation**

Follow up your invitation letters with telephone calls to remind invited guests of the upcoming meeting. During the call, maintain a friendly and professional conversational style. Review the major topics in your letter and explain why the person would be a valuable member of the committee. Be prepared to answer questions about the responsibilities and time commitments that might be required by participating in the committee's work. Be flexible enough to accommodate existing schedules.

### **Prepare an Agenda and Information Package for the First Meeting**

Your next task is to prepare an agenda for the first committee meeting. List the important topics and the time available for each one. Consider the following major topics for your agenda.

Introductions (5 - 10 minutes)

A summary of the committee's purpose and objectives (10 minutes)

Plans for the program kick-off press conference (10 minutes)

Plans for the first three months of committee activities (10 minutes)

Selection of a committee chair (10 minutes)

Arrangements for the next meeting (5 minutes)

Prepare an information package for committee members that includes a copy of the agenda, the names and telephone numbers of all invited guests, and an events calendar mapping the committee's activities for at least the first three months of the committee's existence. Fill the calendar with example activities to encourage comments and suggestions during the meeting. The following list includes examples of activities that were used as goals by two committees that supported a speed enforcement program. Neither of the committees was able to implement all of the target activities, but listing candidate or target activities early in the committee process serves the important purpose of establishing goals toward which the committee can work.

Include in the information package a summary of local statistics relevant to the issues for which you are organizing the committee. For example, if speed enforcement is the focus of your effort, prepare a table that presents speed-related crash statistics for your community and compares the local speeding "problem" to other areas or to your state, as a whole. Your local police department, state police/highway patrol office, or state office of traffic safety will have the information you need in an easy-to-use form. These statistics will help you to define the local problem, and to measure the success of your committee's efforts to improve local traffic safety.

#### **Example Publicity Activities and Target Frequencies**

for a Six-Month Campaign to Support a Municipal Speed Enforcement Program

#### **Activity: Individuals Involved Target Frequency**

*Kick-off Press Conference:* Representatives from Mayor's office, DA's office,

media, Police Chief, local highway patrol captain, military and college liaisons, community leaders, teachers, local athletes, and other members of the Program Support Committees. Purpose: Announce the program and dramatically unveil the speed enforcement equipment.

Press package developed by the committee. Once at start of program

*Public Service Announcements:*

English and Spanish radio and TV PSAs by local media

or police personnel, developed by the committees. 3 per week per station

*Media events and special news coverage of enforcement activity:*

(e.g., speed-related crash scenes, etc.).

By law enforcement agency, the committee, and local media liaisons. 3 per program

*Routine reporting of program activities (e.g., impending enforcement and*

numbers of citations and ancillary arrests made):

By the Program Support Committees working with

media liaison personnel. Weekly for duration of program

*Supermarket drop-ins:* By Program Support Committees. 1,000 per month x 6 months

*Posters for distribution to high schools, colleges, military installations,*

*bars/taverns/restaurants, and major local employers:*

By Program Support Committees. Several hundred, twice during program

*Outdoor advertising on taxicabs, busses, bus stops, and*

billboards (if possible): By Program Support Committees,

perhaps donated by transportation companies. Several for the duration of program

*Leaflets:* distributed by youth organizations in shopping centers. 9 times per program

*Speakers provided to address organization meetings on topic of speeding:*

By Local law enforcement personnel, NHTSA regional office, state OTS,

and Program Support Committees. 6 per program

*Stopping distance demonstration by experts:* Local law enforcement, Program Support Committees, and local media. 2 per program

*College and military activities:* Contribute materials and information to existing college and military traffic safety programs. Continuous during program

## **Begin Committee Work**

During the first weeks after formation, the committee should prepare for a long-term program support effort. Here are some proven methods for beginning and maintaining effective committee work.

**Select a Committee Name and Logo.** The chosen name should clearly identify the committee, and it might also describe the program it supports. *Speedwatch* was selected by a committee that supported a speed enforcement program because it conveyed the committee's purpose. Another committee changed its name from *Citizens for Sober Driving* to the more general

*Citizens for Safe Driving* when the committee shifted the focus of its efforts from DWI to speed enforcement. If committee members want to identify the committee with the specific deterrence program conducted by the police, a more descriptive name would be appropriate. What is important is that the committee determines its own name.

Next, design a logo for the committee that includes the committee's new name and an illustration that defines the purpose of the committee. Have the logo printed on committee letterhead and on all materials produced by the committee. One of your members will probably have access to the skills and equipment necessary to develop a logo and letterhead; if not, you may wish to recruit an additional member from a local business, such as a copy or print shop.

**Plan a Kick-off Press Conference.** Arrange to hold a press conference approximately three months after committee formation. The press conference will introduce the committee to the community, describe its purpose and objectives, and provide the first opportunity to educate the driving public about the special traffic enforcement program that is planned for the community.

At the first committee meeting, schedule a date, time and location to conduct the press conference. Keep in mind that well-attended and successful press conferences are usually held mid-morning to mid-afternoon, and later in the work week. Try to schedule the press conference before the first scheduled deterrence event (e.g., before the first day of the special speed enforcement effort). Choose a location that can accommodate all attendees and any equipment needed during the press conference. In the past, successful press conferences have been held within city hall chambers, in parking lots where police equipment is displayed and demonstrated, and at sites of serious crashes. Prepare a list of speakers and invited guests. Selected speakers should be linked to enforcement, emergency medical response, or traffic safety in the community, and should be able to attract the local press. An effective group of speakers may include the committee chair, a local or state politician, a spokesperson for a traffic victim's advocacy group, an emergency department physician or nurse, and the police chief. Provide the press with interesting visual opportunities that support the speakers' messages. Ask the police to conduct a stopping distance demonstration as part of the press conference (e.g., or a mock checkpoint if DWI deterrence is the focus of the program), or consider displaying the wreckage of a car involved in a speed-related crash (a gruesome, but particularly effective technique that can be used repeatedly during your publicity program). Lastly, prepare a press package containing materials describing the program, your committee, and the local problem you have organized to counter. Include the following materials in your press kit.

A press release from the local Chief of Police and a state police or highway patrol manager announcing the deterrence program.

A description of the support committee and its planned efforts.

Local speed-related crash statistics.

Literature associated with the deterrence program.

**Plan Three Months of Program and Publicity Efforts.** Prepare for support activities to take place immediately following the kick-off press conference. Immediately begin production of flyers and posters, and distribute them to businesses, schools, and government offices throughout your community. Begin the process of developing professionally produced radio and television public service announcements (PSAs) by recruiting local broadcasters. In the meantime, prepare written PSAs that local radio stations can immediately air during rush hour drive times. Other start-up activities include the following.

Plan committee participation at upcoming community events.

Start a traffic safety speakers' bureau (traffic sergeants and motor patrol officers are particularly effective in this role).

Develop traffic safety programs with local schools and colleges.

Capitalize on the creativity and unique character of your committee by developing original ideas and a signature approach toward the deterrence program. The more distinctive your effort, the more attention it is likely to get from the press, the community, and the driving public. Further, integrate your committee's publicity efforts with local festivals, parades, and county fairs. For example, encourage your local law enforcement agency to establish a booth at festivals and fairs (staffed by committee volunteers and law enforcement personnel), and participate in local parades (e.g., arrange for a local towing company to carry a crashed vehicle on a flatbed truck in the parade, with your committee's message printed on a banner, etc.).

**Continue to Recruit New Committee Members.** Over time, committee faces will change and the fresh ideas and enthusiasm brought in by new members will sustain the program support efforts. It is critical to continually recruit new members -- especially those with the talents and resources needed to sustain the committee's efforts. For example, if you are having difficulty obtaining news coverage of committee and law enforcement activities, it is a good idea to recruit a local newspaper reporter to participate in the committee. The reporter may choose not to become a member, but he or she will be more likely to pay attention to your activities if invited to participate.

### **Provide Feedback to the Committee**

Periodically assess the effects of the committee's efforts by reviewing local crash statistics and estimating the level of public exposure achieved by committee events and programs. Use this information to plan future publicity and education strategies. Good sources of information include local police records, state traffic safety records (frequently published as annual reviews), and the number and types of traffic-related items appearing in local newspapers.

### **Summary**

Select a traffic safety issue to serve as the program's focus.

Select zones within the community on the basis of speed-related crashes and citizen complaints of speeding.

Devote considerable, high visibility enforcement effort to the special zones for at least six months.

Collect relevant data to be able to evaluate program effects.

All special traffic safety enforcement efforts should be accompanied by vigorous publicity programs to

achieve the maximum general deterrence effects. In fact, it might be the publicity as much as the enforcement that causes any objective improvements in measures of traffic safety. A committee of concerned local citizens can be organized to direct this effort, and to provide other assistance with the program.

The most effective programs are characterized by close cooperation between police and committee personnel. The process should be one in which police help with the publicity program and committee members assist police in their special enforcement efforts.

Newspapers are the greatest source of public awareness of special enforcement programs, but the program activities must be newsworthy to receive news coverage. Any effort to enhance the "newsworthiness" of a program or activity will contribute to free publicity, and ultimately, to public awareness.