


Memorandum

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Subject: INFORMATION: Achieving Maximum Results in Safety

Date: MAY 17 2006

From: 
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Associate Administrator for Safety

Reply to
Attn: of: HSA-10

To: Division Administrators

Over the past two years the Office of Safety has established a new, focused approach to advancing safety. This focused approach is based on applying limited resources to the areas most likely to achieve results. This philosophy has been adopted as our method of managing the safety program in an Agency.

The SAFETEA-LU reinforces the concept of a focused approach with its requirements for using data for making decisions and allocating resources, and the requirement to develop a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). Section 148(c)(2) of title 23 U.S.C., as amended by section 1401(a)(1) of SAFETEA-LU, Identification and Analysis of Highway Safety Problems and Opportunities, delineates specific requirements for determining safety problem identification and countermeasure analyses. The legislation also provides flexibility in the use of HSIP funds to address State safety issues. It is clear from the legislation that safety funds are to be used on the most effective treatments at the locations with the greatest needs, and that we are to use the best available data to determine the best treatments for each State's needs.

With respect to eligibility of funding, Section 148(a)(5) of title 23 U.S.C., provides a listing of eligible highway safety improvement projects. However, it is important to note that the first, most important decision in establishing safety strategies is to determine need based on sound data. While a wide range of projects is eligible for funding, eligibility is secondary in the decision process. For example, addressing crashes involving wildlife is an eligible activity, but if it does not emerge in the State SHSP as a major need, HSIP funds should not be used for that purpose in that State.

Section 148(d)(2) of title 23 U.S.C., makes clear that other Federal-aid funds are eligible to support and leverage the safety program. Improvements to safety features, such as guardrail, that are routinely provided as part of a broader Federal-aid project should be funded from the same source as the broader project. This allows the HSIP funds to be reserved for stand-alone safety projects. This is consistent with the provision of separate funding for safety projects and with FHWA's long-standing position on the use of safety funds.



In summary, we have the opportunity to significantly advance safety through leveraging funds and focusing spending on projects where the return on investment will be maximized. Recent discussions on this topic among the safety staff in the FHWA have been helpful as we move forward. It will be important, now more than ever, to assure that funds are focused on those strategies most likely to reduce the number of deaths and injuries, and to maximize opportunities to advance safety.

cc: Associate Administrators
Directors of Field Services
Resource Center Managers
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