



U.S. Department
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Federal Highway
Administration

National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration

Memorandum

Subject: **INFORMATION:** State Safety Target
Setting and Coordination

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To: FHWA Division Administrators and
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Beginning for Calendar Year (CY) 2018, State Departments of Transportation (State DOTs) and State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs) must set safety targets in accordance with 23 CFR Part 490 for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and 23 CFR Part 1300 for the Highway Safety Plan (HSP). While SHSOs and State DOTs have been coordinating on the HSP targets for some time, this is the first year the HSIP targets must be submitted to FHWA. State DOTs should coordinate identical targets for the common performance measures (23 CFR 490.209 (a)(1)) with the SHSOs. State DOTs also need to coordinate their safety targets with the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in their States (23 CFR 490.209 (d)(1)).

To assist with these coordination efforts, FHWA's Office of Safety, in coordination with NHTSA, facilitated Safety Target Setting Coordination and Training Workshops in 45 States in 2016 and 2017. The evaluations revealed that the workshops were beneficial in supporting State safety stakeholders as they set their safety targets.

During the workshops, some partners were confused about the data sources to use as they set their identical targets. Reporting baseline performance was another item that generated inconsistent agreement. To address these issues, we have drafted two Q & A's below.

Q: What data should be consulted as States begin the safety target-setting process?

A: Developing data-driven safety targets requires multiple data sources and analytical methods. In addition to forecasting trends, States should consider various factors (i.e., changes in vehicle miles of travel and population, laws, etc.); assess countermeasure

strategy effectiveness and prioritization; and evaluate resource allocation. States may also want to evaluate targets in terms of ambition and achievability.

The FHWA does not identify a specific methodology to use when establishing safety targets. States have the flexibility to establish safety targets using a data-driven methodology and the data sets most appropriate for their State. To assist with establishing safety targets, States should consult multiple data sources. For example, States should use data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS), State data from their motor vehicle crash databases, trauma registry, and other available sources.

Setting safety targets is difficult due to the inter-disciplinary nature of safety planning. Several different factors influence highway safety, including demographics, policy measures, enforcement, roadway design, and laws. Stakeholders should draw on their experience and the experience of other agencies to forecast how different factors may impact safety targets. Population data, local travel demand models for vehicles miles traveled, and State driver, vehicle, and roadway safety databases are examples of data to review to assist in setting targets. Reviewing countermeasure strategy effectiveness information is important to determine how improvements may influence target-setting decisions. The FHWA's Crash Modification Clearinghouse, the Highway Safety Manual, and NHTSA's Countermeasures that Work document are examples of available resources that can be used.

Regardless of the data-driven methodology States use in establishing safety targets, the annual targets are established based on measures using a five-year rolling average (23 CFR 490.207(b)). For example, a methodology that States and MPOs could use to set a target for CY 2018, could be five-year rolling averages for years 2008-2012, 2009-2013, 2010-2014, 2011-2015 and 2012-2016. These five different values can be used to create a trend line. The trend line can then be extrapolated and used to forecast future five-year averages including 2013-2017 and 2014-2018. Once trend lines are developed, States and MPOs can consider different factors that may affect trend lines as they determine annual safety performance targets.

Q: What years of data do the NHTSA and FHWA require for “baselines”?

A: Section 1300.11(c) of NHTSA's Interim Final Rule¹ requires States to document current safety levels (baseline) using FARS data only. For the 2018 Highway Safety Plan (HSP), due July 3, 2017, States must document current safety levels using 2011-2015 FARS² and HPMS data, and the five most current years of available State serious injury data. The SHSOs commonly provide current safety levels or baselines as they relate to performance measures in narrative form (e.g., reduce total fatalities by 6 percent from 400 (2011-2015 average) to 376 (2014-2018 average) by December 31, 2018).

¹ This rule can be found at 81 Fed. Reg. 32554 (May 23, 2016).

² 2011-2014 Final FARS and 2015 FARS Annual Report File (ARF).

The FHWA defines *baseline performance as the five-year rolling average that ends prior to the year in which targets are established* (23 CFR 490.211 (c)(2)(ii)).

Therefore, because CY 2018 targets are established in 2017, the baseline years for CY 2018 targets are CY 2012-2016. (Note: this is separate from NHTSA's requirement to provide 2011-2015 current safety level (baseline) information).

The FHWA will determine whether a State DOT has met or made significant progress toward meeting its CY 2018 performance targets in approximately December 2019 and expects to notify State DOTs of their progress by March 2020. A State is considered to have met or made significant progress toward meeting its performance targets if at least four out of the five safety performance targets have either been met or the actual outcome for the target is better than baseline performance. For targets that are not met, FHWA will compare a State's actual outcome for CY 2018 targets to their baseline performance (CY 2012-2016) to determine if significant progress was achieved (23 CFR 490.211). The FHWA will use FARS and FARS Annual Report File (ARF) for the fatality targets, State data for the serious injuries targets, and HPMS data for rate-based targets (23 CFR 490.211).

The chart on the next page summarizes the data sources used and the years considered for CY 2018 safety targets for easy reference. Please share this information with your States.

The FHWA's Office of Safety has a variety of fact sheets, FAQs, recorded webinars, and technical assistance offerings on its Safety Performance Management Measures website at <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/spm/>.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Dana Gigliotti for FHWA, available at dana.gigliotti@dot.gov or at 202-366-1290, and Ms. Amy Schick for NHTSA, available at amy.schick@dot.gov or at 202-366-2764.

**Data Sources Used and Years Considered for CY 2018 Targets
For FHWA and NHTSA's Three Common Safety Performance Measures**

Baseline	Data Sources Used	Years
NHTSA in the HSP	Fatalities: FARS and FARS ARF Serious Injuries: State serious injury data VMT: HPMS data	2011-2015
FHWA in the HSIP	Fatalities: FARS/FARS ARF Serious Injuries: State serious injury data VMT: HPMS data	2012-2016

CY 2018 Targets	Data Sources Used	Years
For NHTSA and FHWA	Fatalities: All available data sources including but not limited to FARS, FARS ARF, State fatality crash data and other non-crash data e.g., EMS and injury surveillance system data. Serious Injuries: State serious injury data VMT: State/HPMS data	2014-2018

Target Achievement	Data Sources Used	Years
FHWA	Fatalities: FARS and FARS ARF Serious injuries: State serious injury data VMT: HPMS data	2014-2018 actual performance will be used to determine if CY 2018 targets were met; if targets are not met, then 2014-2018 actual performance will be compared to 2012-2016 baseline performance