Strategic Highway Safety Plan

DRIVER BEHAVIOR: DISTRACTED DRIVING
Goals

1. Preview entire CT SHSP
2. Examine Distracted Driving
Strategic Highway Safety Plan

What

- Systematic identification of key safety needs to reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads

Why

- Guides investments (HSIP) & NHTSA
- Required by FHWA (FAST Act)
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What’s in it

- Overview
- Improving Roadway Safety in CT
- Emphasis Areas
- Implementation and Evaluation
Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Overview

- Guides safety expenditures
- 5 year update cycle
- Leadership
- Collaboration
  - Governor’s Ofc
  - MPOs and RTCs
  - Other Trnsp Modes
  - Law Enforcement
  - Hwy/Rail Grade Xg
  - Motor Carriers
  - Motor Veh Admin
  - Municipal Officials
  - NonMotorized Reps
  - Fed, State, Tribal, Local, Private Safety Stakeholders

Leadership

Leadership support has come from the CTDOT, Department of Public Health, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), University of Connecticut (UCONN), CT Police Chief’s Association, and the Connecticut Office of Transportation Planning (COTP). Leadership helps communicate the SHSP’s vision, mission, and goals, and it supports institutionalizing any changes in safety decision-making related to the SHSP.

The most successful SHSPs have at least one person who is responsible for gathering key players and ensuring forward progress. The State Safety Engineer at CTDOT serves as the State’s lead for this effort.

A Champion

Establishing a formal organizational structure for the SHSP helps facilitate effective management of the effort. Connecticut’s SHSP structure includes the following components:

- Leadership Committee
  - Executive Committee
  - Steering Committee
  - Emphasis Area (EA) Teams
- Other stakeholders include representatives from the Governor’s Office, Motor Carriers, Motor Veh Admin, Municipal Officials, NonMotorized Reps, Fed, State, Tribal, Local, Private Safety Stakeholders, and Hwy/Rail Grade Xg.

Organization Structure

- Executive Committee
  - Leadership support comes from the Governor’s Office, Department of Public Health, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Department of Motor Vehicles, University of Connecticut, and the Connecticut Office of Transportation Planning.
  - The Executive Committee includes representation from the Executive Committee and Emphasis Area Teams that work closely together to ensure that the plan is implemented.
- Steering Committee
  - The Steering Committee includes the following organizations: CTDOT, the Connecticut Highway Safety Office, the Governor’s Office, the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and the Connecticut Office of Transportation Planning.
- Emphasis Area (EA) Teams
  - Emphasis Area Teams are focused on specific areas of concern, such as highway safety, public transportation, and pedestrian safety.
  - Each Emphasis Area Team has leadership representation from each relevant state agency.

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Overview

- FHWA mandated performance targets
  1. No. of Fatalities
  2. Rate of Fatalities per 100 Million VMT
  3. Number of Serious Injuries
  4. Rate of serious injuries per 100 Million VMT
  5. Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries
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Improving Roadway Safety in CT

- 5-year moving average used to smooth volatilities
- Fatalities decreased 5%
- Serious injuries decreased 31%
- Combined (A+K) decreased 28%
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Improving Roadway Safety in CT

- Goal is to decrease combined fatalities and serious injuries (A+K) on all public roads, 15% by 2021
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Emphasis Areas

- Critical Roadway Locations
- Driver Behavior
- Young Drivers
- Non-Motorized Users
- Motorcyclist Safety
- Traffic Incident Management
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Implementation & Evaluation

- Requires collaboration among the 4Es
  - Education
  - Enforcement
  - Engineering
  - Emergency Services

- Objectives distilled into daily activities

- SHSP Evaluation
  - Process
  - Performance

5.1 Implementation

Implementation of the 2017-2021 SHSP will require cooperation and collaboration among the “4Es” of safety and all stakeholders, including engineers, public outreach experts, educators, law enforcement, and emergency medical service providers.

Each E will develop, implement, and monitor E-specific action plans that include activities to support each strategy. These strategies will help connect each SHSP’s specific fatal and serious injury reduction goal.

Each EA team will meet regularly for the duration of this SHSP and each EA Team meeting will include reporting of action plans completed to date and assigning new actions to be completed between meetings.

The graphic below illustrates the process of daily activities, action steps, and strategy implementation to meet the EA objectives.
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Back to Emphasis Areas...

- Driver Behavior
- Unrestrained Occupants
- Substance-Involved Driving
- Aggressive Driving
- Distracted Driving

4.2.4 Distracted Driving

The lack of useful crash data in the area of distracted driving has made it difficult to select a goal measuring the impacts on distraction-related crashes. The Performance Objective is to decrease fatalities and injuries as a result of crashes caused by driver distraction, especially those caused by texting while using mobile phone use. To that end, the quantifiable performance objective is focused on HAE activities.

- To maintain or increase the number of police agencies participating in HAE distracted driving enforcement from 50 in 2016 to 60 in 2018.

SHSP Strategies for Distracted Driving

1. Increase enforcement, especially HAEs of Connecticut’s hands-held mobile phone use for drivers.

2. The number of citations written during grant-funded overtime for hand-held mobile phone use will be used as a tracking measure for this strategy.

3. Educate the driving public regarding the dangers of distracted driving through media campaigns.

4. Public awareness campaigns, grassroots outreach, and public information campaigns, and educational programs.
Distracted Driving

What’s the Problem?

- Distracted driving has been around as long as cars, but...
- There seems to be more technological distractions today, but...
- It’s really difficult to know for sure
Distracted Driving

Northeast Legacy

- The Northeast has had great success in securing NHTSA 405 funding to combat distracted driving.
- There have been major enforcement and education campaigns in
  - Connecticut
  - Delaware
  - Massachusetts
  - New York
Distracted Driving

Back to Emphasis Areas...

- Only countermeasures are Enforcement and Education
Distracted Driving

Stuck in the 70s…

- In the 1970s, impaired driving laws were only weakly enforced. Since then, enforcement has increased.
- In a study, young drivers reviewing crashes, listed distracted drivers as more responsible for a crash than impaired drivers.
- When asked to assign fines and jail time, however, they punished impaired more severely.
- Norms have not yet changed for distraction.
Distracted Driving

Meanwhile, back in the 70s…

- Legislation is important, but...
- We can’t change behavior with legislation alone
- Cultural norming also relies on education
Distracted Driving

What else…

- There are some other countermeasures being proposed
  - Signing
  - Voice texting
  - Text readers
  - Heads up displays

- To date, nothing has proven as effective as enforcement and education
Distracted Driving

Is it working?

- An October 6, 2017 NHTSA press release reports a 2.2% decrease in distraction related fatalities
Thank You