

5.9 GHz Spectrum Virtual Forum
NHTSA Deputy Administrator James Owens
Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Good afternoon, and thank you for attending today's forum. I'm James Owens, the deputy administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. I would like to thank the Secretary of Transportation, Elaine L. Chao, for her continued leadership and her unwavering commitment to our shared safety mission.

In 2019, Americans drove more than 3.2 trillion miles – a record. That's a lot of miles, but, consider that there are more than 225 million licensed drivers in the U.S. – twice as many as in 1970. And with more drivers engaging in risky driving behaviors during the public health emergency, we need to re-energize our commitment to improving traffic safety.

At NHTSA, we see an opportunity to save lives through technology, specifically vehicle-to-everything technology—or V2X. Rarely has there been a traffic safety technology with as much potential as V2X communications.

Think about this—V2X communications do not rely on line of sight to identify objects, and are not affected by fog, snow, or darkness. V2X can augment camera and radar-based crash avoidance technologies, and provide the driver that extra critical time needed to avoid the crash.

V2X technology also holds the promise of increased protections for vulnerable road users by allowing vehicles to exchange information in real time with bicyclists and pedestrians carrying cell phones.

We estimate that full adoption of V2X safety applications could prevent hundreds of thousands of crashes and save thousands of lives.

We remain committed to supporting the development and deployment of V2X technology and we are talking to industry about making positive use of the available spectrum

V2X may also be considered in future updates to the New Car Assessment Program, the agency's five-star safety ratings for new vehicles. NHTSA hopes to release a Request for Comment notice soon seeking public comment on proposed upgrades, including new advanced driver assistance technologies, new test procedures, as well as other ongoing initiatives for future updates to NCAP. Including V2X in NCAP one day could help spur further commercial deployment and adoption.

Vehicle communications systems hold the promise to save lives, improve transportation efficiency, and change the way we drive, walk, and bike – and NHTSA will continue to do our part in working with our state and industry partners to advance this technology.

Thank you very much.