U.S. Department of Transportation

SAFETY FIRST

Federal Highway Administration

Who is the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)?

The FHWA, a USDOT agency, supports state and local governments in the design, construction and maintenance of the nation's highway system, and roads on federally and tribally owned lands.

What does FHWA do?

FHWA provides financial and technical assistance to state and local governments so America's roads, highways and bridges continue to be among the safest and most technologically sound in the world.

Safety Programs

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) : The HSIP is a core Federal-aid program that requires a data-driven, strategic approach to improving highway safety. Its purpose is to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, including non-state-owned roads and roads on tribal land. A state must develop, implement and update a strategic highway safety plan (SHSP), produce a program of projects or strategies to reduce identified safety problems, and evaluate the SHSP on a regular basis to use HSIP funds. These funds can be used for various projects, including those that correct or improve a specific hazardous road location, add a safety feature or remedy a highway safety problem.

Intersection Safety: A major part of addressing road safety challenges involves intersections, which are considered planned points of conflict in any roadway system, including U.S. and state highways, county roads and local streets. Intersection safety is a national, state and local priority. As a result, FHWA continues to develop and deploy resources designed to help make intersections safer.

Roadway Departure Safety: A roadway departure (RwD) crash is one which occurs after a vehicle crosses an edge line and leaves the road. To effectively prevent RwD crashes and fatalities, FHWA works with states and localities to implement countermeasures that can help keep vehicles safely on the road, provide for safe recovery and reduce crash severity.

Roadway Safety Data Program: Safety programs' effectiveness is directly linked to the availability and analysis of good data with which to make informed decisions. Improving safety data is important for federal, state, local and other partners who must overcome challenges, such as a lack of resources and inconsistent data across agencies. FHWA provides assistance to help its partners evaluate data to develop and implement effective safety programs or other infrastructure improvement efforts.

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Safety Programs Continued

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety: Pedestrian and bicyclist safety improvements depend on an integrated approach that involves engineering, enforcement, education and emergency services. FHWA's Office of Safety develops projects, programs and materials for use in reducing pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities.

Local and Rural Road Safety Program: The majority of highway fatalities take place on rural roads owned and operated by local agencies. In many cases, the agencies often do not have the resources needed to adequately address safety problems on these roads. FHWA's Local and Rural Safety Program identifies, develops, and delivers safety programs and products to agencies, elected officials, governments and other stakeholders to improve safety on local and rural roads.

Roadway Safety Professional Capacity Building Program: Safety professionals strive to improve roads, but face challenges as new technologies – and new professionals – enter the field. FHWA's Roadway Safety Professional Capacity Building Program provides resources to help safety experts and specialists develop critical knowledge and skills within the roadway safety workforce.

Guardrail Resources and ISPE: A guardrail is a safety barrier intended to shield a motorist who has left the roadway. They are installed to make roads safer and lessen the severity of crashes. To help State DOTs improve safety, FHWA launched a two-year pilot in 2017 that will analyze crash data provided by California, Massachusetts, Missouri and Pennsylvania involving seven of the most widely used guardrail devices. The pilot will help determine how states can perform an In-Service Performance Evaluation of the devices they install, and identify challenges in conducting effective assessments. FHWA intends to use information gained from the pilot to recommend best practices for states to follow – particularly in areas related to real-time data collection on crashes involving roadside safety hardware, communicating crash reporting among relevant state agencies, and managing hardware maintenance and inventory data.