



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Who is NHTSA?

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation that works to reduce deaths and injuries and economic costs due to motor vehicle crashes.

What does NHTSA Do?

NHTSA works to deliver safer roads by encouraging Americans to make safer choices when they drive, ride, and walk; advancing lifesaving vehicle safety technologies; and supporting state and local police in their efforts to enforce the rules of the road that protect us all.

Safety Tools/Resources

NHTSA.gov offers consumers the tools they need to keep themselves, their families and communities safe. Whether the topic is:

[Road Safety](#) tips to protect yourself when you drive, ride and walk;

[Risky Driving](#) choices that cause deaths and injuries;

5-Star Safety [Ratings](#) that help consumers shop for new cars and trucks;

How to check for [Recalls](#) that affect your vehicle's safety;

And the latest in vehicle [Technology and Innovation](#).

NHTSA's [trafficsafetymarketing.gov](https://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov) also offers resources for our safety partners to support safer roads, and to connect and work together toward our shared safety mission.

Safety Programs

Vehicle Safety

By researching new vehicle safety technologies, mandating their inclusion on new vehicles, and rooting out defects in vehicles and equipment, NHTSA helps protect Americans when they're on the road.

NHTSA conducts research on how vehicle improvements and other technological advances can better protect people in a crash (crashworthiness) and reduce the likelihood of crashes (crash avoidance).

Safety Defects and Recalls

NHTSA works to keep vehicles and certain vehicle equipment with safety-related defects off our roads. We do this by monitoring fatality, injury and property damage reports and investigating consumer complaints. NHTSA can also be petitioned to undertake an investigation into an alleged safety defect.

If NHTSA investigates a defect and finds a safety-related defect the agency ask the manufacturer to conduct a [recall](#). If the manufacturer does not conduct a recall, NHTSA may issue an initial decision that a safety-related defect exists. Manufacturer must notify vehicle or equipment owners, dealers, distributors and fix the problem free-of-charge to owners by repairing, replacing, or repurchasing the vehicle or piece of equipment in question.





National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Safety Programs Continued

Encouraging Safer Choices on the Road

Americans' safety is directly affected by the choices we all make on the road when driving, riding, or walking. NHTSA works with state and local law enforcement to ensure we all obey the rules of the road and teams with other safety partners to address specific safety challenges, such as drunk or distracted driving. NHTSA works to educate Americans about these [dangerous driving behaviors](#) and the things they can do to protect themselves and others.

Highway Safety Grant Programs

The [grants](#) that NHTSA provides to states and localities to improve safety on our roads are the backbone of the agency's efforts to reduce deaths and injuries. The agency distributes grant funds to state agencies to support highway safety plans, and to provide startup money for new safety initiatives.

NHTSA's ten regional offices and their staffs help states identify their highway safety problems and evaluate safety programs and activities; provide training to local program managers; and offer NHTSA publications and program manuals, safety promotional material, and other resources.

Enforcement

Tough [enforcement](#) makes tough laws against drunk driving, failing to wear a seat belt and other dangerous behaviors more effective.

One of the most effective countermeasures in reducing highway traffic fatalities is creating general deterrence through High-Visibility Enforcement in partnership with state and local law enforcement, like the *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* and *Click It or Ticket*, which helps reduce unsafe driving behaviors by increasing the perceived risk of being caught by law enforcement.

National Center for Statistics and Analysis

NHTSA's [National Center for Statistics and Analysis](#) (NCSA) conducts collection and analysis of reliable crash data to support the agency's motor vehicle and highway safety activities.

Fighting Odometer Fraud and Auto Theft

NHTSA enforces Federal prohibitions against [tampering with motor vehicle odometers](#).

Bicyclist and Pedestrian Safety

Americans are increasingly choosing walking and biking for transportation and exercise. NHTSA is working to reflect this change in transportation by emphasizing [pedestrian](#) and [bicyclist](#) safety. NHTSA works with the Federal Highway Administration and other partners to reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes.

Driver Licensing and Graduated Driver Licensing

NHTSA maintains the National Driver Register (NDR), which helps law enforcement take drivers with serious traffic violations or suspended licenses off the road, and works with states on Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL), which require young drivers to maintain safe driving records before receiving a full license.

Making Vehicles More Fuel Efficient

NHTSA sets and enforces Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards. The agency sets separate standards for passenger and for heavy-duty vehicles. These standards apply to a manufacturer's overall production, not just to one specific model line. NHTSA determines annually the level of compliance for each manufacturer's new passenger car and light truck fleets.

Supporting Local Emergency Medical Services

NHTSA works with the national Emergency Medical Services community to improve and enhance pre-hospital emergency care and transportation and the improvement of emergency care and transport. [EMS.gov](#)

