

Reducing **FATALITIES** by **HALF**

AASHTO Safety Leadership Forum IV

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
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**NCHRP Project No. 17-42 (05)
AASHTO Safety Leadership Forum IV**

Reducing Fatalities by Half

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for
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Transportation Research Board
of The National Academies

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PHOTO CREDITS

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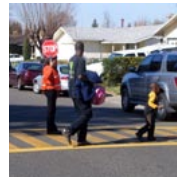


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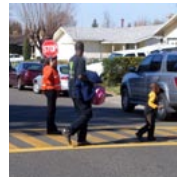
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Executive Summary

The road to achieving AASHTO's ambitious safety goal of reducing fatalities by half was made clearer at the fourth AASHTO Safety Leadership Forum. State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) are fully engaged in the implementation of their Strategic Highway Plans. Preliminary statistics from the past year are strongly suggesting that lasting progress is being made despite some contribution to the success by the lagging economy. The Forum was perfectly timed to share successful state strategies and consider the next critical actions which will be needed to achieve continuing significant reductions.

The stage was set by an analysis of key state safety actions which have made a difference in the recent past and the steps needed to aggressively close the safety gap. Attendees learned about the common paths which had been chosen by their counterparts. The majority focus on young drivers and increasing passenger restraint use has netted a positive turn in those trend lines. On the opposite side, there is a struggle with the issues of unlicensed drivers and motorcycle safety. In these areas, the data is showing significant fatality increases and a need for increased attention across the states.

The knowledge infusion provided the basis for lively interactive conversations among all attendees on two topics. Successful state safety strategies to reduce fatalities were offered in a number of key areas including aggressive goal setting, behavioral safety, and legislative enhancements. The discussion was followed by a thoughtful deliberation on the future needs of state and local agencies to boost their collective ability to meet the goal. The emerging reauthorization mantras of accountability and performance measurement were recognized

as guiding principles for all future actions. Fuller engagement of local agency partners to integrate safety into their planning processes, as well as local participation in the public policy arena, were identified as essential elements to greater success.

Striving to achieve such an ambitious fatality reduction goal requires outreach to all aspects of the transportation system including the vehicle industry. A presentation on enhanced in-vehicle safety technologies and improved vehicle design over the past decades has shown the sizable role these advancements play in reducing fatalities. The development of a myriad of vehicle crash avoidance technologies is the new wave of the future. The extent of their success is not as sure and will depend heavily upon consumer acceptance and adaptability to computer assisted driving.

State and Federal leaders urged everyone to take the wealth of information back to their own offices and use it. A sense of individual ownership for every crash should be instilled to illustrate the level of collaboration needed to deliver even more dramatic fatality reductions. A number of areas which are ripe for attaining fatality reductions were highlighted throughout the Forum.

The provision of an updated CEO Safety Actions Checklist was another helpful tool given to participants. This 11- step guide to the most critical processes and safety practices identifies the touchstones of a successful safety plan. With the added elements of personal commitment and a mutual resolve to succeed, the forecast for achievement of AASHTO's safety goal is promising and well in sight.