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The mission of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), is to save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce economic costs due to road traffic crashes, through education, research, safety standards, and enforcement activity.

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NHTSA was established by the Highway Safety Act of 1970 to carry out safety programs previously administered by the National Highway Safety Bureau. Specifically, the agency directs the highway safety and consumer programs established by the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, the Highway Safety Act of 1966, the 1972 Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act, and succeeding amendments to these laws.

Since NHTSA's inception, the Nation's rate of fatalities due to motor vehicle crashes has declined steadily and is now the safest on record. However, crashes continue to kill tens of thousands of Americans and injure millions more every year. Motor vehicle crashes remain a leading cause of death for Americans of all ages and drain more than $230 billion from the economy annually. Yet these motor vehicle crashes and their related deaths and injuries are preventable.

Dedicated to achieving the highest standards of excellence in motor vehicle and highway safety, NHTSA works daily to help prevent such crashes and their attendant costs, both human and financial. The agency strives to exceed the expectations of its customers through its core values of Integrity, Service, and Leadership.

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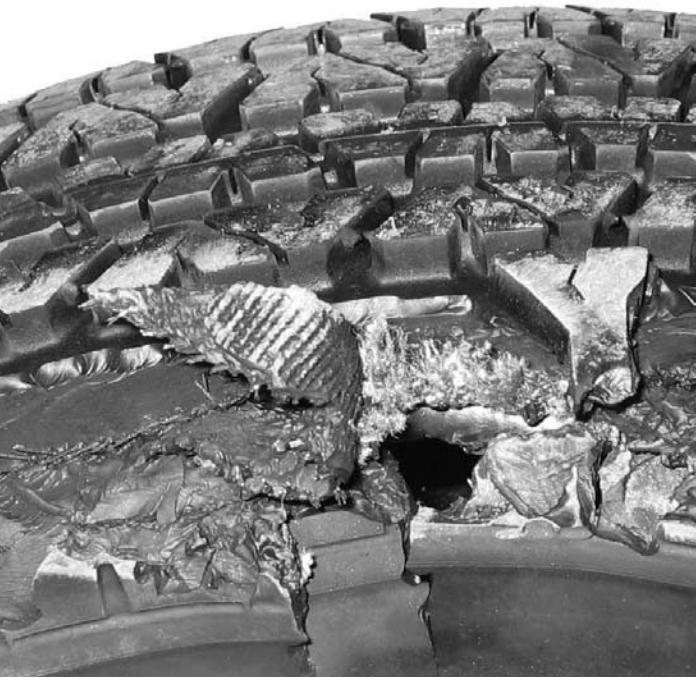
VEHICLES

NHTSA sets safety standards for motor vehicles and associated equipment, investigates possible safety defects, assures that products meet safety standards and are not defective (through recalls if necessary), and tracks safety-related recalls. The agency also enforces regulations on fuel economy, odometer fraud, and vehicle theft.

SAFETY STANDARDS

All new vehicles and certain types of automotive equipment (such as child restraints, tires, and lights) sold in the United States must meet Federal motor vehicle safety standards. These standards cover the parts of the vehicle that most affect its safe operation (brakes, tires, lighting, etc.) or that protect drivers and passengers in the event of a crash (safety belts, air bags, energy-absorbing steering columns, child safety seats, and motorcycle helmets).



NHTSA is responsible for setting new Federal motor vehicle safety standards and reviewing existing ones to determine if they can be improved. The agency also regulates modifications made to vehicles used by people with disabilities.

In adopting or amending a safety standard, NHTSA proceeds through a multi-step process. The agency:

- Conducts research to define the problem;
- Develops and evaluates countermeasures, or methods to address the problem; and
- Establishes and validates tests used to ensure compliance with the standard.

A proposed standard must be practicable, meet the need for motor vehicle safety, and be stated in objective terms.

After a standard is developed, the agency issues a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the Federal Register to obtain feedback on the proposal from manufacturers, trade associations, insurers, consumer groups, and private citizens. After public review and comment, the agency may issue a final rule adopting or modifying the standard.

Once a standard is in effect, the agency tests and monitors motor vehicles and equipment to make sure that they meet the relevant safety standards. NHTSA has also established procedures to assure that vehicles imported into the United States were either built to U.S. safety standards or are modified to meet these standards.

VEHICLES

SAFETY DEFECTS

NHTSA is alerted to investigate a potential safety defect through a variety of sources, primarily consumers who call the DOT Vehicle Safety Hotline (888-237-4236) or visit NHTSA's vehicle and equipment safety Web site (**www.safercar.gov**) to submit a Vehicle Owner Questionnaire. The agency receives approximately 4,000 reports each month of potential safety problems with vehicles and equipment through these channels.

To strengthen and expedite the process of discovering safety problems, the 2000 Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD) Act empowered NHTSA to expand sources of information on potential defects. In response, the agency developed the Early Warning Reporting system, which requires vehicle and equipment manufacturers to notify NHTSA of fatalities, injuries, property damage claims, consumer complaints, and safety campaigns that have come to their attention. If a review of all available information indicates that a safety defect may exist, NHTSA officials open an investigation. NHTSA can also be petitioned to undertake an investigation into an alleged safety defect; if the petition is granted, an investigation is opened. If the petition is denied, the reasons for the denial are published in the Federal Register.

When an investigation is opened, agency engineers conduct a preliminary evaluation and request information from the manufacturer, such as data on complaints, injuries, warranty claims, modifications, or parts sales. The manufacturer also has an opportunity to present its views regarding the alleged defect.

The preliminary evaluation leads NHTSA officials to either close the investigation or to move to the next step in the process — an engineering analysis. However, before the decision to close or to move forward with the investigation is made, the information gathered in the preliminary evaluation may convince the manufacturer to undertake a recall.

In the engineering analysis, the agency gathers additional information about the alleged defect, sometimes conducting tests or surveys. At the conclusion of this analysis, the investigation may be closed without further action. If the investigating officer believes a safety-related defect exists, the agency may send a "Recall Request Letter" to the manufacturer.

If the manufacturer does not conduct a recall, NHTSA may issue an initial decision that a safety-related defect exists. The agency then holds a public meeting to let all interested parties present their views. The material gathered in the investigation is provided to the manufacturer and made available to the public in the NHTSA reading room (see "Access to Agency Information and Records", page 18).

The investigative record, including the information submitted at the public meeting,

is presented to the NHTSA Administrator, who may issue a final decision that a safety defect exists and order a recall. Manufacturers can challenge the recall order in a Federal District Court. The agency can also go to court to compel a manufacturer to comply with its order, but rarely has to do so as most issues are usually resolved before this stage.

RECALLS

When a safety defect or a failure to comply with a safety standard is found, the vehicle or equipment manufacturer must take specific corrective steps known as recalls. NHTSA oversees the recall process to assure these steps are adequate. Information on recalls and other safety issues is available at **www.safercar.gov**, the NHTSA vehicle and equipment safety Web site.

While most recalls (78%) are initiated by manufacturers, the majority of vehicles recalled (62%) have been the subjects of NHTSA investigations. If a safety defect or failure to comply with a safety standard is discovered, the manufacturer must notify vehicle owners, dealers, distributors, and NHTSA.

The manufacturer is also required to remedy the problem free-of-charge to owners by repairing, replacing, or repurchasing the vehicle or piece of equipment in question. The manufacturer initially decides what the remedy will be, but if it's not effective, the manufacturer may be required to change it. These recall requirements apply to vehicles and equipment up to 10 years old and to tires up to 5 years old.

NHTSA maintains records for all safety recalls and monitors them to ensure that the scope is appropriate and that the completion rate and remedy are adequate.

FUEL ECONOMY

NHTSA is responsible for setting and enforcing the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, which were created after the oil embargo of 1973 in recognition of the country's vulnerability to foreign oil supplies and pricing. Separate CAFE standards are set for passenger cars and light trucks.

These standards apply to a manufacturer's overall production — not just to one specific model line. Compliance is determined annually for each manufacturer's new passenger car and light truck fleets. Thus, for example, a manufacturer that produces one line of cars with low fuel economy can still meet the car standard if it produces enough cars with high fuel economy.

ODOMETER FRAUD

Turning back the odometer on a vehicle to increase its retail value is a criminal activity. NHTSA estimates that each year, millions of used vehicles have their odometers turned back — a maneuver that defrauds the buyer by falsely inflating the vehicle's value, sometimes by thousands of dollars.

NHTSA enforces Federal prohibitions against tampering with motor vehicle odometers and enforces Federal require-

ments that odometer disclosure statements be provided when vehicles are sold. The agency's odometer fraud enforcement staff works closely with State and local officials to identify and prosecute violators.

AUTO THEFT

NHTSA helps prevent auto theft by requiring that certain vehicle parts be marked with the vehicle's identification number (VIN). Effective September 1, 2006, all passenger cars and multipurpose vehicles (MPVs) will be subject to parts-marking requirements. Based on the likelihood of theft, NHTSA will determine which light-duty truck (LDT) lines should also be subject to partsmarking. Vehicles with anti-theft devices, however, can be exempted from parts-marking requirements. NHTSA establishes standards aimed at reducing motor vehicle theft and provides consumers with theft rates and comprehensive insurance information. This information is available online at **www.nhtsa.dot.gov**.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Motor vehicle performance requirements, test procedures, and methods for certifying compliance vary widely among nations. Some of these variations produce different levels of safety protection, while others place unnecessary burdens on manufacturers who market internationally and result in extra costs for consumers.

NHTSA seeks to improve vehicle safety in the United States while minimizing unnecessary differences in international standards by participating in relevant international forums, identifying the best safety practices from around the world and harmonizing them with U.S. standards.

In 2004, the United States and more than 20 other nations agreed on establishing new safety standards known as Global Technical Regulations (GTRs), which marks the first international vehicle safety regulations agreement. The first GTR, a new door lock and retention standard, is the result of three years of research, development, and negotiations.

On the horizon are several additional standards that would regulate head restraints, motorcycle brakes, the installation of lighting devices, vehicle window glazing, and pedestrian safety, among others. In the end, harmonized vehicle safety standards can bring about a better level of safety at a lower cost for the consumer.

In addition, NHTSA has a long history of working with the international community on behavioral-related safety issues. Through a science- and data-based approach, NHTSA collaborates with international organizations to improve road traffic safety by identifying best practices in traffic safety and by sharing data system, intervention, and technology experiences.

NHTSA works through State highway safety agencies and other partners to encourage the safe behavior of drivers, occupants, cyclists, and pedestrians across the country. Since traffic safety problems affect people in all communities, the effort to implement programs to improve safety involves people at all levels of government, within businesses and organizations, and individual volunteers.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Alcohol is the single largest factor involved in motor vehicle deaths in the United States today. In recent years, Federal, State, and local efforts to reduce alcohol-related traffic fatalities have resulted in a slow decrease in such fatalities, leading to approximately 2.9-percent fewer deaths between 2002 and 2003, another 2.4-percent decline between 2003 and 2004, and approximately 5-percent fewer deaths since 1998.

However, alcohol remains involved in approximately 40 percent of all fatal traffic crashes nationwide. Use of other drugs, whether illegal, prescription, or over-the-counter, also contributes to traffic deaths and injuries — and is a significant part of the overall impaired-driving problem.

NHTSA works to discourage impaired driving through a three-pronged strategy: high-visibility law enforcement with supporting media campaigns; enhanced prosecution and adjudication; and medical screening and brief intervention for alcohol abuse problems. Special emphasis is placed on reaching high-risk populations; including those under age 21, those ages 21 to 34, repeat offenders, and high-BAC (blood alcohol concentration) offenders.

Fortunately, broad support exists to fight impaired driving. NHTSA collaborates with State and local governments, businesses, safety organizations, and citizen groups, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), to increase public awareness of the problem, effectively address it, and help prevent impaired-driving deaths and injuries. In addition, the agency operates **www.stopimpaireddriving.org**, which provides information, research, and tools to a wide variety of audiences to help them successfully fight the impaired-driving problem.

OCCUPANT PROTECTION

The use of safety belts and child safety seats has reached historically high levels, saving thousands of lives every year. A decade ago, overall safety belt usage in the United States was approximately 58 percent. In 2004, an 80 percent usage rate was achieved, which saved an estimated 15,000 lives in that year alone. In June of 2005, safety belt use in the

PEOPLE

United States reached 82 percent, the highest level yet recorded. Air bags saved an estimated 2,647 lives in 2004, and an estimated total of 16,905 lives from 1987 through 2004.

NHTSA is dedicated to continuing this positive trend through leadership in the planning and development of traffic safety programs related to safety belts, child safety seats, and automatic protection devices.

Working in cooperation with public- and private-sector partners, NHTSA promotes occupant protection through support for effective State safety belt use laws, the high-visibility enforcement of such laws, and increased public awareness of the proper use and overall effectiveness of occupant protection devices.

All States and the District of Columbia have laws requiring that young children ride in approved safety seats, but many children still are not properly secured in safety seats or safety belts. NHTSA also strongly encourages the use of booster seats for children who are too big for child safety seats but not big enough to fit properly in an adult safety belt. This applies to children ages 4 to 8, unless they are 4' 9" or taller.

NHTSA supports efforts that help families to acquire and install child safety seats correctly. New vehicles are required to be equipped with a LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children) system to simplify proper installation. The agency also works with States and local communities to enable parents who cannot afford a child safety or booster seat to borrow or purchase one.

NHTSA developed The National Standardized Child Passenger Safety Training Program curriculum, which is used to train technicians around the country to help parents purchase and properly install child safety seats in vehicles. Certified child passenger safety technicians are available to inspect child safety seats and to ensure the seats are correctly installed. Information on child safety seat inspection locations can be found oline at **www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cps/cpsfitting** or by phone at 888-327-4236. This information is also available at **www.seatcheck.org** and 866-SEATCHECK.

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

NHTSA's motorcycle safety program focuses on three areas: preventing crashes, preventing crash-related injuries, and limiting the seriousness of these injuries through appropriate emergency medical response. Per mile traveled, motorcyclists in 2003 were about 32 times more likely than passenger car occupants to die in a crash and about six times more likely to be injured.

Motorcycle crash prevention efforts are targeted at motorcyclists (improving skills and licensing, decreasing alcohol and drug impairment) and at other drivers (increasing awareness of motorists' responsibility to share the road with motorcyclists).

NHTSA's injury control initiatives include promoting the use of protective gear, including helmets, which have shown to be about 37-percent effective in preventing fatal injuries to motorcyclists. NHTSA also supports rider training and licensing and programs to reduce impaired driving.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST SAFETY

Pedestrians most at risk are children, older adults, and people who are impaired by alcohol. Bicyclists most at risk are children, although the majority of bicycle fatalities involve unhelmeted bicyclists (children *and* adults).

NHTSA works with the Federal Highway Administration and other partners to reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes. Programs focus on research, promotion of bicycle helmet use, public information, technical assistance and training, law enforcement, and safer traffic engineering.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

School buses are the safest form of motor vehicle transportation. NHTSA sets safety standards for school bus construction and equipment that provide a high level of protection to bus occupants in the event of a crash. NHTSA also requires safety equipment that increases the safety of passengers getting on and off of a school bus.

The greatest risk to school bus passengers occurs when they enter and exit a school bus. Other school bus safety issues include driver-training, illegal passing of school buses by motorists, and safety restraints for pre-school-age children traveling on school buses. To address these issues, NHTSA develops safety programs targeting school bus operators, motorists, and school bus riders.

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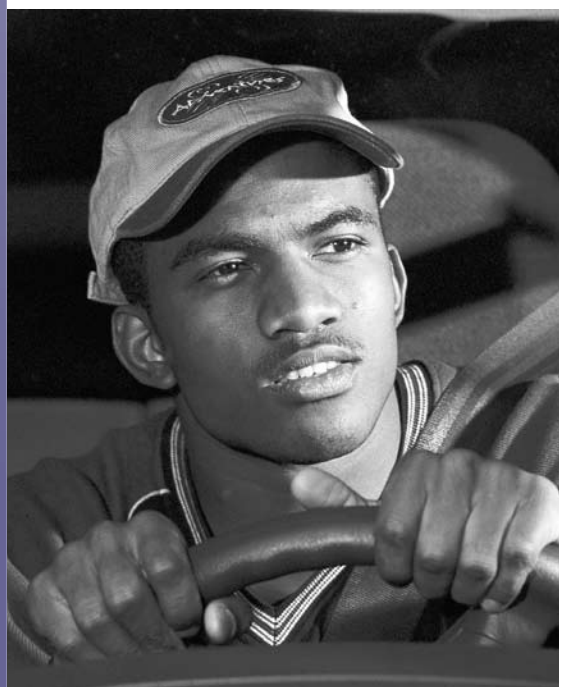
OLDER DRIVER SAFETY

Age-related physical changes and illnesses put older drivers at an increased risk of dying in a motor vehicle crash. NHTSA, through its Older Driver Program, works to provide older drivers and those around them with the information necessary to mitigate this increased risk. The program also works to equip medical and social services providers, licensing professionals, and law enforcement officials with the training and tools necessary to help senior drivers remain safely mobile for as long as possible. In addition, NHTSA helps to educate the families of older drivers about ways to approach their loved ones in discussing safe-driving issues and alternative transportation options.

DRIVER LICENSING

The authority to issue a driver's license falls within the purview of the 50 States and the District of Columbia. To ensure the integrity of licensing, NHTSA is working in partnership with the States to improve coordination and uniformity in the way State departments of motor vehicles issue driver licenses and exchange driver licensing information. Emphasis is placed on reducing fraudulent driver licenses and IDs through training and the use of state of the art technology. These efforts reduce the number of illegal or unsafe drivers with invalid licenses, and contribute to national security by reducing the ease by which persons entering the country illegally can move about.



NATIONAL DRIVER REGISTER

NHTSA manages the National Driver Register (NDR), which Congress established in 1960 as a central index of State reports on drivers who have been convicted of serious traffic violations or whose privileges have been suspended or revoked. State licensing agencies routinely check the NDR Problem Driver Pointer System to verify that an applicant's license is not currently revoked or suspended, or has not otherwise been denied by any other State.

DRIVER EDUCATION AND GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING

Compared to many other countries, drivers are licensed at a relatively young age in the United States (typically age 16), which contributes to an overrepresentation of young drivers involved in fatal crashes. In fact, per mile driven, 16-year-old drivers have the highest rate of involvement in fatal motor vehicle crashes in the country. To address this problem, many States are enacting graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws, which require that young novice drivers successfully graduate from partial to full licensure. These programs have proven successful in consistently reducing crashes, injuries, and fatalities among teen drivers. NHTSA is working in partnership with the States to improve current GDL programs by researching and evaluating the effectiveness of various components, such as passenger restrictions, safety belt restrictions, and parent-taught driver training.

SPEED ENFORCEMENT

NHTSA works with States and communities to discourage speeding and aggressive driving through engineering, enforcement, and education strategies. Speeding — exceeding the posted speed limit or driving too fast for conditions — is one of the most common factors in traffic crashes and fatalities. Speeding is cited as a contributing factor in nearly one-third of all highway deaths.

NHTSA has joined with the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to form a speed management team. The team works with State and local governments to develop strategies to reduce speed-related crashes. These strategies include setting and enforcing rational speed limits, conducting research on speeding risks, exploring new technologies to address speeding, and implementing effective public information and education programs to deter speeding. In June 2005, the team released the Department of Transportation Speed Management Strategic Initiative, which is designed to outline strategies and action steps to better address speed management.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The mission of NHTSA Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is to support comprehensive EMS system development and enhancement, and serve as the lead Federal agency for technical and policy expertise on EMS systems. NHTSA focuses its EMS efforts on the role of pre-hospital emergency care and transportation, the reduction of mortality and morbidity related to traffic crashes, and the improvement of emergency care and transport for people with all types of illnesses and injuries. Since 1966, Federal EMS product and program development designed to advance our Nation's EMS systems has rested with NHTSA and its predecessor agency, the National Highway Safety Bureau.

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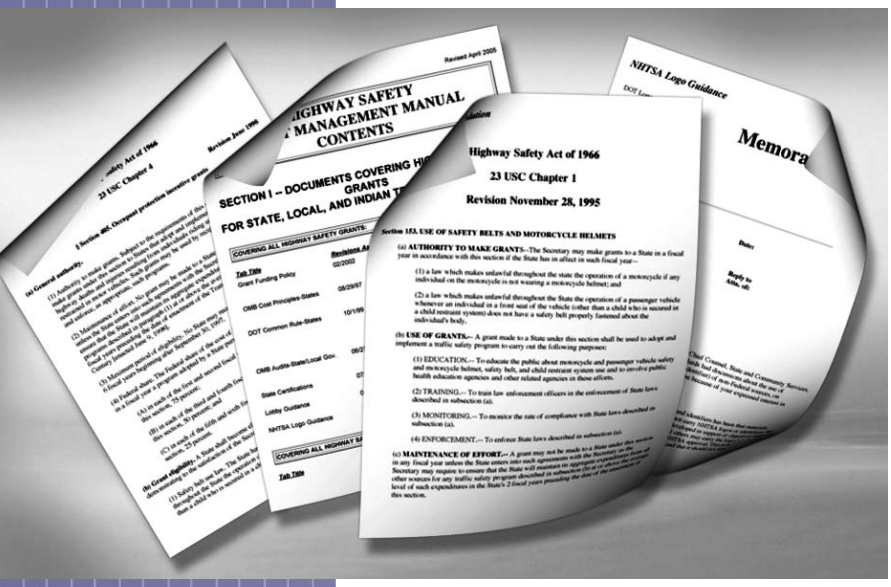
Areas of NHTSA EMS responsibility include:

- Establishing, in concert with the national EMS community, vision and goals for EMS systems, as well as the development of strategies to achieve these objectives.
- Facilitating nationwide EMS education system development and implementation.
- Developing and promoting strategies for a stable and robust EMS workforce.
- Enhancing the quality of EMS research.
- Improving the accuracy and consistency of pre-hospital EMS data collection and analysis.



- Promoting effective EMS communications and enhanced 911 systems to assure public access to emergency response services.
- Continuing a consensus-based process with Federal agencies and other national partners in the development and implementation of EMS policies, programs, and strategies.

To further enhance the quality of EMS care and systems nationwide, NHTSA works closely with its Federal partners at the Department of Health and Human Services (HRSA, CDC, Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness) and Department of Homeland Security (United States Fire Administration, Chief Medical Officer, Infrastructure Protection, NIMS Integration Center) and others. The 2005 Department of Transportation reauthorization bill, SAFETEA-LU, established the Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services (FICEMS), staffed by NHTSA, to provide additional Federal EMS coordination and reporting to Congress.

HIGHWAY SAFETY GRANT PROGRAMS

The Highway Safety Act of 1966 created a partnership among Federal, State, and local governments to improve and expand the Nation's highway safety activities. Every State, U.S. territory, and Indian Nation, along with the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, has an agency responsible for coordinating its highway safety programs.

NHTSA, under Section 402 of the Highway Safety Act, distributes State and community grant funds to these agencies, based on a statutory formula. The grants support highway safety plans, provide start-up money for new programs, and give new direction to existing programs.

Program activities include promoting the proper use of safety belts, air bags, and child safety seats; discouraging impaired driving; promoting motorcycle, bicycle, and pedestrian safety; improving law enforcement traffic services and attendant adjudication issues; and improving emergency medical services.

Additional State grant programs have been created to target safety belt and child safety seat use, impaired-driving prevention, and highway safety data collection activities.

STATE AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

NHTSA's 10 regional offices deliver valuable highway safety support at the local level. These 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 materials, and other resources.

The following is a list of the NHTSA regional offices, including contact information and the States served by each office:

New England Region
Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
55 Broadway, Kendall Square, Code 903,
Cambridge, MA 02142
Phone: 617-494-3427 / Fax: 617-494-3646
e-mail: **region1@nhtsa.dot.gov**
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Eastern Region
222 Mamaroneck Avenue, Suite 204,
White Plains, NY 10605
Phone: 914-682-6162 / Fax: 914-682-6239
e-mail: **region2@nhtsa.dot.gov**
New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

Mid-Atlantic Region
10 S. Howard Street, Suite 6700,
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: 410-962-0090 / Fax: 410-962-2770
e-mail: **region3@nhtsa.dot.gov**
Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia

Southeast Region
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street, SW.,
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-562-3739 / Fax: 404-562-3763
e-mail: **region4@nhtsa.dot.gov**
Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

Great Lakes Region
19900 Governors Drive, Suite 201,
Olympia Fields, IL 60461
Phone: 708-503-8822 / Fax: 708-503-8991
e-mail: **region5@nhtsa.dot.gov**
Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

South Central Region
819 Taylor Street, Room 8A38,
Fort Worth, TX 76102
Phone: 817-978-3653 / Fax: 817-978-8339
e-mail: **region6@nhtsa.dot.gov**
Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Indian Nations

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Central Region
901 Locust Street, Room 466,
Kansas City, MO 64106
Phone: 816-329-3900 / Fax: 816-329-3910
e-mail: **region7@nhtsa.dot.gov**
Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska

Rocky Mountain Region
12300 West Dakota Avenue, Suite 140,
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Phone: 720-963-3100 / Fax: 720-963-3124
e-mail: **region8@nhtsa.dot.gov**
Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

Western Region
201 Mission Street, Suite 2230,
San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone: 415-744-3089 / Fax: 415-744-2532
e-mail: **region9@nhtsa.dot.gov**
Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa, Guam, North Mariana Islands

Pacific Northwest Region
3140 Jackson Federal Building
915 Second Avenue,
Seattle, WA 98174
Phone: 206-220-7640 / Fax: 206-220-7651
e-mail: **region10@nhtsa.dot.gov**
Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

***NHTSA conducts and sponsors a wide range of research and development projects. Examples include crash data collection and analysis, crash tests, research on human behavior, and analytical studies of vehicle components. Results of these activities are disseminated via technical reports, conferences and briefings, at workshops and public meetings, and online at* www.nhtsa.dot.gov *and* www.safercar.gov.**

RESEARCH RELATED TO VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

NHTSA conducts research on how vehicle improvements can decrease the likelihood of crashes (crash avoidance) and, given that crashes occur, how to better protect vehicle occupants from death or injuries in crashes (crashworthiness).

Crash avoidance research examines technologies to improve braking, visibility, and driver assistance systems.

Crashworthiness research develops improvements to a vehicle's structure and safety restraints (e.g., safety belts and air bags) based on problems identified using the agency's extensive databases of crashes.

NHTSA also conducts research on improving the safety of heavy trucks and buses.

This research supports the agency's rulemaking and consumer information efforts and can speed up the adoption of new safety technologies.

RESEARCH RELATED TO PEOPLE

NHTSA conducts national research, demonstration, and evaluation programs related to driver, passenger, pedestrian, pedalcyclist, and motorcyclist behavior, providing a solid scientific foundation for behavioral programs. Topics include impaired driving (alcohol and other drugs), safety belt and child safety seat use, speeding and other unsafe driving behaviors, older drivers, driver education, enforcement, adjudication, emergency medical services, and driver fatigue and distraction.

Further, NHTSA conducts evaluations of significant agency behavioral campaigns, such as *Click It or Ticket* (designed to increase safety belt usage), and documents the results of these campaigns in reducing injury and fatalities on our Nation's highways.

NHTSA also studies the driver-vehicle-environment interaction to reduce crashes caused by driver error using new research tools, such as the National Advanced Driving Simulator (NADS). Located at the University of Iowa, NADS is used to study is-

sues associated with driver performance and behavior. Research that would be extremely hazardous on a real roadway can be conducted and repeated within the safe confines of the NADS research laboratory.

Using engineering principles and techniques, NHTSA conducts biomechanical research on impact injuries. Based on this knowledge, the agency develops crash test dummies, injury test criteria, and performance limits to provide the best possible safety for people in crash situations. A complete "family" of crash test dummies — including infants, children, adolescents, adults, and pregnant women — is used to ensure that all safety systems required by NHTSA regulations provide protection for everyone.

INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

An Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) encompasses a range of wireless and wireline control and electronics technologies. When integrated into the transportation system infrastructure and in vehicles themselves, these technologies will help save lives, time, and money. NHTSA is a leader in the safety initiatives of DOT's ITS program. In this role, NHTSA investigates how advanced technology systems can be used to help avoid collisions on the Nation's highways.

VEHICLE RESEARCH AND TEST CENTER

NHTSA's Vehicle Research and Test Center (VRTC) in East Liberty, Ohio, is an in-house laboratory that conducts agency research and development in vehicle handling and stability, mechanics of crash injuries, crashworthiness, defects investigations, and vehicle crash tests. Both short- and long-term research programs are conducted.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATISTICS AND ANALYSIS

NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) conducts data collection and analysis to support the agency's motor vehicle and highway safety activities. Reliable databases of crash statistics are essential to identify and analyze traffic safety problems and to measure the effectiveness of safety efforts.

NCSA conducts major studies of crash data through research programs such as the National Automotive Sampling System (NASS), Special Crash Investigations (SCI), and the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), an annual census of all motor vehicle fatalities in the country. NCSA provides information to other Federal agencies, State and local governments, citizens, industry members, researchers, and the international safety community. The Center also works with States in the development, implementation, and use of integrated highway safety information systems.

NCSA develops and conducts economic, statistical, and other impact analyses required to support proposed and final rulemakings and in order to estimate the costs of motor vehicle crashes. The Center directs, coordinates, and conducts evaluations of final rules a few years after they have taken effect to determine their costs and benefits in reducing crashes, fatalities, and injuries.

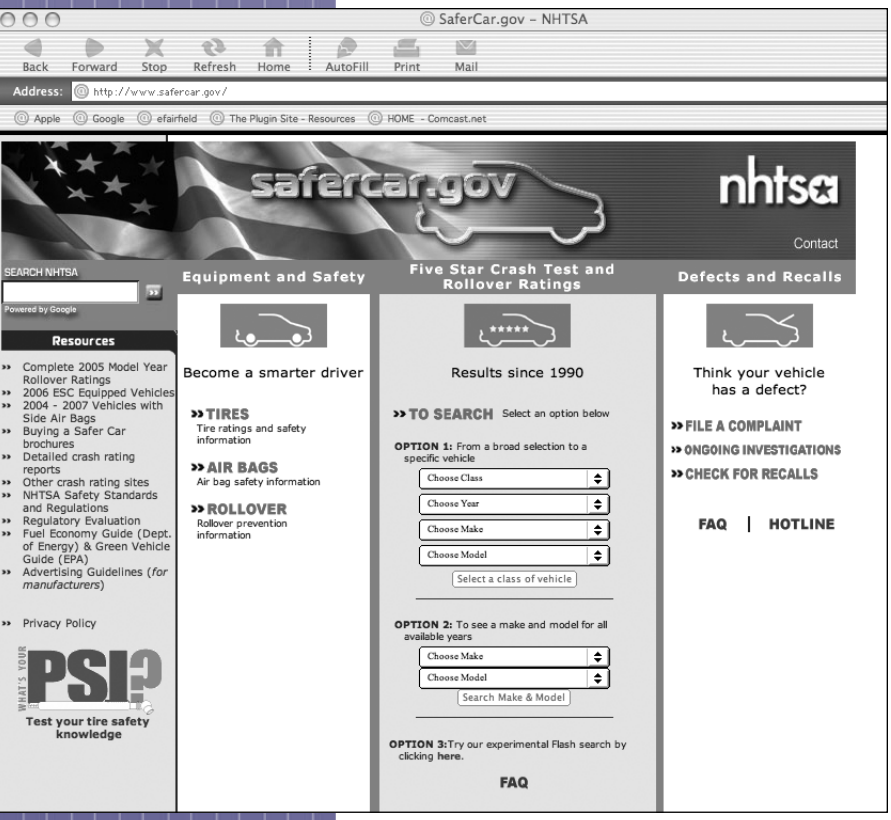
NCSA crash data is available from the NHTSA Web site at **www.nhtsa.dot.gov** or toll-free by phone at 800-934-8517.

INFORMATION

Keeping the public informed is a particularly important NHTSA responsibility. As the Federal authority on traffic safety issues, the agency works with the national news media, automotive industry trade press, and other sources to provide the public with information that can make motor vehicle travel much safer.

DOT VEHICLE SAFETY HOTLINE

Administered by NHTSA, the toll-free DOT Vehicle Safety Hotline (888-327-4236) functions as the "single point of contact" for the agency, assisting consumers with vehicle safety and equipment issues of all kinds. The TDD number for persons with hearing impairments is 800-424-9153 (outside metro Washington, DC) and 202-366-7800 (inside metro Washington, DC).

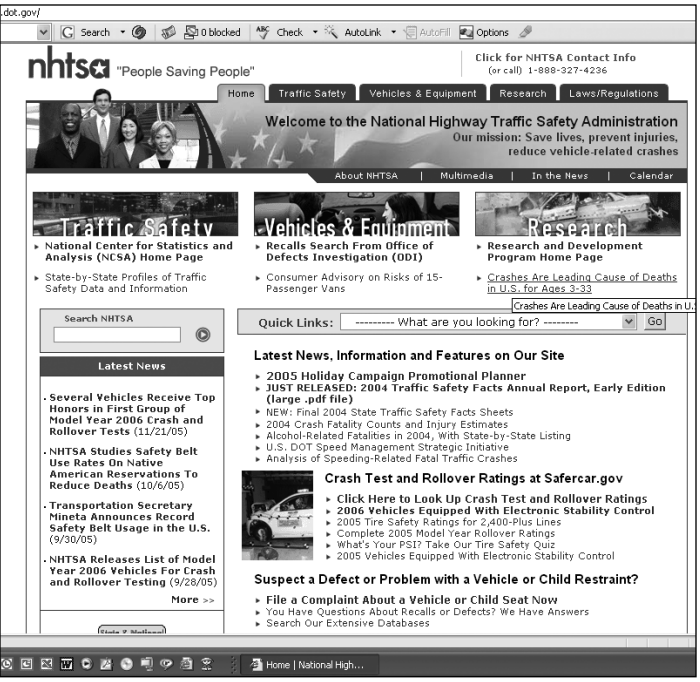


The Hotline provides a critical link for motorists, mechanics, and others to report motor vehicle and motor vehicle equipment safety problems and to obtain timely recall and other safety information. Accessible in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Hotline accepts calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Spanish-speaking Hotline representatives are available between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST), Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Consumers can also access Hotline resources via the NHTSA Web site and at **www.safercar.gov**. In addition, some popular Hotline information, such as publications concerning child safety seats, uniform tire quality grading, and the New Car Assessment Program, can be faxed to consumers upon request.

WEB SITE

The NHTSA Web site, **www.nhtsa.dot.gov**, is a popular resource for the general public, safety organizations, manufacturers, universities, and government agencies. The site receives millions of visits each month, includes more than 60,000 documents, and offers the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) as sources of information on vehicle crashes.



The public can visit the site to report safety-related problems with their motor vehicles and related equipment. These reports are used to help NHTSA determine whether a safety defect investigation should be opened, which could lead to a safety recall. Other site features include crash test and rollover ratings, vehicle and child safety seat recalls, child safety seat information, safe driving campaign planners, service bulletins, and safety alerts.

Many of these resources are also available at **www.safercar.gov**, the agency's user-friendly Web site designed specifically to meet the motor vehicle safety needs of consumers. Individuals and communities interested in learning more about impaired driving and how to fight it more effectively will find a wealth of information and resources on **www.stopimpaireddriving.org**, a NHTSA Web site dedicated to the issue.

NEW CAR ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The NHTSA New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) provides comparative safety data for consumers to use in their vehicle purchasing decisions. In testing vehicles, NHTSA utilizes stars as a measurement of safety, with five stars being the best rating. This is why NCAP is sometimes referred to as Government Star Ratings.

The NHTSA frontal and side-impact crash ratings illustrate how well new vehicles protect drivers and passengers in those types of crashes. Rollover ratings indicate a vehicle's propensity to roll over in a single-vehicle crash.

In the frontal crash test, new cars and light trucks are crashed head-on into a fixed barrier to approximate a head-on collision between two identical vehicles each moving toward the other at 35 mph. Comparisons for frontal impact ratings are meaningful only when made between vehicles of the same type (passenger cars, vans, etc.) and within a similar weight range (within 250 pounds of each other).

In the side-impact crash test, a moving barrier rams the side of a vehicle, approximating an intersection-type collision where a vehicle moving at 34 mph strikes a vehicle traveling 17 mph.

Rollover ratings are used to indicate the relative likelihood of a vehicle rolling over in a single-vehicle crash. The ratings are derived from the measurement of the height of a vehicle's center of gravity and its track width, and by dynamic vehicle testing.

INFORMATION

NHTSA announces NCAP results regularly through news releases. The data can also be found on the NHTSA vehicle and equipment safety Web site at **www.safercar.gov** or in the agency's *Buying a Safer Car* brochure.

NHTSA also provides Ease-of-Use Ratings for child safety seats, giving consumers detailed information on which seat systems and models provide which features, and how easy or difficult it is to properly install a particular seat.

ACCESS TO AGENCY INFORMATION AND RECORDS

Information regarding defects investigations, safety-related recall campaigns, technical service bulletins, consumer complaints, compliance test reports, and crash tests are on the NHTSA vehicle and equipment safety Web site at **www.safercar.gov**.

A wide variety of highway safety-related documents are available for public viewing and copying in the agency's Technical Information Services (TIS) reading room. Materials include complete NHTSA docket files concerning motor vehicle theft and vehicle identification numbers (VIN) and NHTSA docket files for years 1997 and earlier.

The reading room is located at NHTSA's headquarters in the main DOT Building (the Nassif Building), 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590, in the new plaza-level location, Room PL-402. The TIS phone number is 800-445-0197, the fax number is 202-493-2833, and the e-mail address is tis@nhtsa.dot.gov. The reading room is open to the public on weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is closed on Federal holidays.

DOT's Dockets Management Facility maintains and provides public access to NHTSA's more current docket files for years 1998 to present. The facility is located at 400 Seventh Street SW., Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590. The phone number is 800-647-5527, and the Docket Management Web site is **http://dms.dot.gov/search**.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AT NHTSA

If you are interested in joining a prestigious professional agency whose mission is to save lives and reduce injuries, then explore a career at NHTSA. A part of the Department of Transportation, NHTSA is an exciting and progressive organization that welcomes people who are committed to improving traffic safety.

NHTSA offers unique job opportunities in a wide range of fields, including behavioral science and medicine, engineering, outreach, communications, statistical analysis, and law.

A diverse workforce is essential to NHTSA's ability to bring forward new ideas and approaches to eliminating safety threats on America's roadways. NHTSA's people are its most important asset.

To learn more about career opportunities at NHTSA, please visit our Web site at **www.nhtsa.dot.gov**.

NHTSA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

EEOC
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

FOR MORE INFORMATION

DOT Vehicle Safety Hotline: **888-327-4236**

DC Metro Area Hotline: **202-366-0123**

TDD Number for Persons with Hearing Impairments: Toll Free **800-424-9153**

DC Metro Area TDD Number for Persons with Hearing Impairments: **202-366-7800**

NHTSA Web Site: **www.nhtsa.dot.gov**

New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) Web Site: **www.safercar.gov**

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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