

Texas Department of Transportation

SCOHTS-SM State Report

April 2016

In 2015, Texas formed a Traffic Safety Task Force to collaborate with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to identify best practice recommendations and new ideas in an effort to achieve the goal of reducing the number of deaths and crashes on Texas roads. Texas experienced an increase in the number of motor vehicle traffic fatalities in 2014 with 3537 fatalities. One explanation for the increase is the recent surge in Texas population, which has reached 27 million. That population growth has resulted in a 1.75 percent increase in vehicle miles traveled.

The Texas Transportation Safety Task Force will work with TxDOT to continue to seek safety improvements that will save lives. The task force includes members from state and federal transportation agencies, law enforcement, judicial organizations, automotive partners, construction contractors, traffic safety organizations, energy companies, trucking and rail industry, metropolitan planning organizations and public university research centers.

Texas has implemented a systemic safety program that focuses on three of the critical crash types that have been identified in the Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan (run-off the road, intersection and head-on crashes).

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) worked with the FHWA to conduct an Intersection Safety Improvement Plan (ISIP), which identified low cost countermeasures at urban intersections in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. TxDOT is currently working with the FHWA to expand the ISIP to the other urban regions in Texas. The Texas ISIP is expected to be completed this year.

The Systemic Widening Program provides additional paved surface width on highways that have an existing width less than 24 feet on rural highways with high risk factors relating to traffic volumes, lane configuration, truck traffic and roadway alignment. Texas is also in the process of conducting a Systemic Barrier program which will provide concrete or cable median barriers on highways that have high risk factors relating to traffic volumes, truck traffic and median widths. In addition to these programs, Texas is considering Systemic Rumble Strip and Systemic Curve Improvement programs to reduce the number and severity of run-off the road and head-on crashes.

In order to bring the critical safety issue of the number of traffic fatalities to the public's attention, Texas continued a new awareness campaign displaying on dynamic message signs statewide the year to date number of fatalities on all Texas roadways. Texas posts the traffic fatality count message along with a traffic safety message for a week every month. The year to date fatality count is also displayed on a scrolling banner on the TxDOT website. This display is updated daily.

We continue to enhance our Strategic Highway Safety Plan and use it to direct our safety investment decisions. In 2014, TxDOT facilitated 5 regional workshops which afforded stakeholders the opportunity to contribute to the statewide blueprint for highway safety activities and funding for the next several years. The stakeholders included representatives from engineering, law enforcement, education, emergency medical fields, and other individuals who have an interest in traffic safety.

During this past fiscal year, Texas let to contract, 582 highway safety improvement projects totaling over \$339 million. We also programmed 584 new highway safety improvement projects totaling over \$201 million. The projects generally focused on the following types of work:

- Barriers
- Curve Improvements
- Grade Separations
- Intersection Improvements
- Rumble Strips
- Off-System Improvements
- Widening Highways

In 2011, TxDOT launched the Crash Reporting and Analysis for Safer Highways (CRASH) component of the state's Crash Records Information System (CRIS). CRASH is a web-based application that allows law enforcement officers to enter crash information electronically from the field or their office via the secure, public internet. In 2012, TxDOT launched the Submission Services electronic submission process. This process allows participating law enforcement agencies to submit crash reports programmatically to CRIS via a secure external facing web service channel.

Currently, 85.5% of the state's crash report volume is being submitted electronically. Since CRASH implementation, user-friendly screens and enhancements have further reduced the amount of time required for an officer to produce a crash report.

Our Click it or Ticket safety belt enforcement and education program continues to promote safety belt use in Texas. In 2015, Texas achieved a 90.47% compliance rate, our 10th year in a row to achieve higher than 90%.

Texas continues to promote safety through our statewide traffic safety campaigns:

- "Talk, Text, Crash" distracted driving program,
- "Share the Road" motorcycle safety campaign that includes radio and TV public service announcements, billboards, internet messages and decals,
- "Drink. Drive. Go to Jail" impaired driving campaign,
- "Click it or Ticket" safety belt campaign,
- "Be Safe Drive Smart" public education campaign in the oil and gas production regions of the state urging motorists to drive a safe speed, give trucks space on our roadways, pass carefully and avoid texting while driving.