Proactive Traffic Safety:
Empowering Behaviors to Reach Our Shared Vision of Zero Deaths and Serious Injuries

Dr. Kari Finley
12:00 pm MST
About Webex

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About the Center for Health and Safety Culture

We are an interdisciplinary center serving communities and organizations through research, training, and guidance to cultivate healthy and safe cultures.
Core Issues

Traffic Safety

Substance Misuse

Domestic Violence

Child Wellbeing
Traffic Safety Culture Pooled Fund
The transportation Pooled Fund (TPF) Program allows federal, state, and local agencies and other organizations to combine resources to support transportation research studies.

Current participating States: CA, CT, IA, ID, IN, LA, MT, NH, TX, UT, and WA.

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The only acceptable traffic safety goal is to reduce fatalities and serious injuries to zero.
Driver behavior is a significant factor contributing to motor vehicle crashes.¹

To improve traffic safety, we must focus on strategies that influence risky driver behaviors.

Risky driver behaviors include deliberate behaviors like

- speeding,
- texting while driving,
- impaired driving, and
- not wearing a seat belt.

The majority of road users already engage in safe behaviors.

- Most people (90%) wear a seat belt.\(^1\)
- Most people (92%) do not drive within two hours of drinking alcohol.\(^2\)
- Most people (95%) do not drive within two hours of using cannabis.\(^2\)
- Most people (81%) do not speed (in excess of 10 mph over the posted speed).\(^3\)


We Are in This Together

**QUESTION**

- How do we leverage the large group of people already engaging in safe road user behaviors to influence the smaller group engaging in risky road user behaviors?

**ANSWER**

- Proactive Traffic Safety
The roadway transportation system is a shared community.

Each of us is a member of the community because we depend on this shared system to connect us with people, places, goods, and services.

For this system to meet everyone’s needs and be sustained, we have an obligation to one another to act in ways that support the system.

Compliance… AND SOMETHING MORE!
To achieve higher levels of safety, individuals need to go beyond compliance to commitment – a commitment to safety for themselves and others.

A commitment to safety means committing to avoiding risk as well as committing to taking actions to keep safe.
PROACTIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY IS…

- Proactive behaviors demonstrating commitment to a safe roadway transportation system.

- “Proactive”
  - “acting in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes”¹
  - “serving to prepare for, intervene in, or control an expected occurrence or situation, especially a negative or difficult one”²

PROACTIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY INCLUDES PROACTIVE BEHAVIORS LIKE:

- Supporting existing traffic safety efforts
- Staying informed of safety-related issues
- Planning a safe way to get home before drinking alcohol
PROACTIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY INCLUDES PROACTIVE BEHAVIORS LIKE:

- Speaking up about unsafe behaviors like not wearing a seat belt or driving distracted
- Establishing family rules about safety like never texting while driving or never riding with someone who has been drinking alcohol
- Establishing a workplace policy like always wearing a seat belt in a company vehicle
GROWING PROACTIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY

- Creates a shared commitment to safety
- Encourages proactive behaviors that support safety efforts
- Encourages proactive behaviors that extend beyond one’s own safety to support the safety of others
- Expands the focus to include the large group of safe road users as a way to influence the small group engaging in risky behaviors
- Enhances existing Strategic Highway Safety Plan efforts
Growing proactive traffic safety is an opportunity for traffic safety professionals and stakeholders to create lasting and sustainable improvements in traffic safety behaviors.
PROACTIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY – Where We Go from Here

TOOLS

- A Proactive Traffic Safety Primer
- A Proactive Traffic Safety PowerPoint Presentation
- A Conversation Guide
- A Proactive Traffic Safety Poster
Proactive Traffic Safety Primer

• Section 1
• Section 2
• Section 3
• Section 4
A Proactive Traffic Safety PowerPoint Presentation

Proactive Traffic Safety:
Empowering Behaviors to Reach Our Shared Vision of Zero Deaths and Serious Injuries
CONVERSATION GUIDE

PURPOSE
The purpose of the conversation guide is to promote dialogue to foster shared understanding and actions to grow proactive traffic safety.

GUIDANCE
Proactive traffic safety is a new opportunity to strategically address risky traffic behaviors and ultimately achieve and sustain our Towards Zero Deaths goals. As a traffic safety professional or stakeholder, you are a leader to get conversations about proactive traffic safety started. Creating an environment that supports curiosity and lots of questions is important. You might not have all of the answers but, allowing ample time for discussion and exploration is key.

CONVERSATION TIPS
Conversations can occur between two people or among small groups. It is critical that everyone is actively engaged in the conversation so keeping the group size to four people or smaller is encouraged. If the group is larger than four people, consider breaking into smaller groups and allow additional time for groups to share thoughts between discussion questions.

Tips for Effective Conversations
- Listen for understanding.
- Seek to build connections between various thoughts.
- Allow plenty of time to let the conversation unfold. Your investment of time will pay off many times over in the future.
- Encourage input from everyone.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
Here is a list of discussion questions from which to choose. You could choose a few questions to discuss, or you could have the group choose which questions they would like to discuss.

- What opportunities can you see for applying proactive traffic safety in your work right now?
- How could growing proactive traffic safety help you achieve your desired outcomes?
- What would it take to incorporate proactive traffic safety?
- What is needed going forward?
- What are our immediate next steps?
- How is proactive traffic safety similar and different than what we are already doing?
- What are examples of proactive traffic safety we could grow to address our priority safety issues?
- If we were to be successful at growing proactive traffic safety, what new partners might we seek to engage?
- Which of our current partners is in the best position to advocate for and/or grow proactive traffic safety?
- How might we grow proactive traffic safety in the context of families? In the context of workplaces? In the context of schools? In the context of governmental agencies?
A Proactive Traffic Safety Poster

Proactive Traffic Safety: Empowering Behaviors to Reach Our Shared Vision of Zero Deaths and Serious Injuries

**INTRODUCTION**

The only acceptable traffic safety goal is to reduce fatalities and serious injuries to zero. While dramatic improvements in traffic safety have been made, our shared vision of survivable and acceptable injury for all road users is not yet fully realized. There is more work to be done.

A significant factor contributing to urban vehicle crashes is driver behavior. Risky driving behaviors include drinking while driving, speeding, and not wearing a seat belt. These behaviors are risky because they are preventable, and our actions must focus on changing behavior. Specifically, we must focus on creating conditions that increase safer driving behaviors.

The good news is that the majority of road users already engage in safe behaviors: most people wear a seat belt, most people do not drive while drunk, and few people speed excessively. In contrast, the small portion of the population that engages in these behaviors.

A positive traffic safety culture already exists. Yet, not wearing a seat belt, impaired driving, and speeding are leading risky behaviors associated with fatal and serious injury crashes—especially for the small population of the population that engages in these behaviors.

The question that we must ask is: How do we leverage the large group of people already engaging in safe driving behaviors to influence the smaller group engaging in risky road user behaviors?

One way to leverage the positive road safety culture that already exists is to impact the small group of road users engaging in risky behaviors to grow proactive traffic safety.

**WHAT IS PROACTIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY?**

The roadway transportation system is a shared community that includes various users and stakeholders. For this system to work everyone must be safe, and involved in promoting behavior that is easy to spot, promote, and support. The system.

At a basic level, individuals can meet this obligation by complying with existing laws and regulations. However, these compliance is sometimes weak, and enforcement is often imperfect. Therefore, enforcement means a high level of traffic safety includes ensuring that everyone is safe, and behavior is committed to avoiding risk as well as committing to taking actions to keep safe.

This commitment can be demonstrated by engaging in proactive traffic safety. These proactive behaviors demonstrate a commitment to safety beyond oneself to include the safety of the broader transportation system.

**EXAMPLES OF PROACTIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY INCLUDE...**

- Supporting existing traffic safety efforts
- Sharing information of safety-related issues
- Planning a safe way to get home before drinking alcohol
- Teaching about other people’s unsafe behaviors like not wearing a seat belt or drinking alcohol
- Encouraging people to wear seat belts
- Collaborating with alcohol-free policies in community events

**WHY SHOULD WE GROW PROACTIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY?**

- Growing proactive traffic safety
- Creates a shared commitment to safety
- Encourages proactive behaviors that support safety efforts
- Encourages proactive behaviors that extend beyond one’s own safety to support the safety of others
- Encourages the focus on safety efforts to include the large group of safe road users as a way to influence the small group engaging in risky behaviors

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Proactive traffic safety is a new opportunity to improve traffic safety. It is available to help traffic safety professionals grow proactive traffic safety. Additional tools for growing proactive traffic safety include:

- Tip #1: Think as a Team of Allies and Partners
  - Who are my allies in promoting traffic safety?
  - Who can help me introduce a new idea to other key stakeholders?
  - Who can help?
  - Who has a direct stake in growing proactive traffic safety?

- Tip #2: Engage Others about Proactive Traffic Safety

- Tip #3: Grow a Shared Understanding of Proactive Traffic Safety

- Tip #4: Think about Hosting a Meeting, Sharing a Presentation, and/or Facilitating a Conversation about Proactive Traffic Safety

- Tip #5: Use the Available Communication Tools
  - Proactive Traffic Safety PowerPoint Presentation
  - Conversation Guide

- Tip #6: Integrate Proactive Traffic Safety into Existing Strategic Highway Safety Plans

  Depending on your state, how you can integrate proactive traffic safety into your Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) may vary. Here are some ideas:

  - Add a chapter on proactive traffic safety into your Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) with a list of contact persons and priorities to include proactive traffic safety.

- Tip #7: Develop a Plan to Address Proactive Traffic Safety

  - Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSP) must address high-risk behaviors and consider augmenting these strategies with proactive traffic safety.
A Proactive Traffic Safety Poster

Proactive Traffic Safety: Empowering Behaviors to Reach Our Shared Vision of Zero Deaths and Serious Injuries

INTRODUCTION

The only acceptable traffic safety goal is to reduce fatalities and serious injuries to zero. While significant improvements in traffic safety have been made, our shared vision of zero deaths and serious injuries on our nation’s roadways is not fully realized. There is more work to be done.

A significant factor contributing to motor vehicle crashes is driver behavior. Risky driver behaviors include deliberate behaviors (i.e., behaviors that we choose to commit) like speeding, texting while driving, driving impaired, or not wearing a seat belt. These deliberate risky behaviors can be changed. Motor vehicle crashes and serious injuries are preventable, and our efforts must focus on changing behavior. Specifically, we must focus on creating conditions that increase safer deliberate behaviors.

The good news is that the majority of road users already engage in safe behaviors: most people wear a seat belt, most people do not drive within two hours of drinking alcohol or using cannabis, and most people do not speed (in excess of 10 mph over the posted speed).

A positive traffic safety culture already exists. Yet, not wearing a seat belt, impaired driving, and speeding are leading risky behaviors associated with fatal and serious injury crashes – even though it is a small portion of the population that engages in these behaviors.

The question that we must ask is: How do we leverage the large group of people already engaging in safe road user behaviors to influence the smaller group engaging in risky road user behaviors?

One way to leverage the positive road safety culture that already exists is to impact the small group of road users engaging in risky behaviors by grow proactive traffic safety.

WHAT IS PROACTIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY?

The roadway transportation system is a shared community that includes various users and stakeholders. For this system to meet everyone’s needs and be sustained, all individuals have an obligation to one another to act in ways that support the system.

At a basic level, individuals can meet this obligation by complying with existing laws and regulations. However, mere compliance with existing laws and regulations fails to address the myriad of situations that occur that are potentially unsafe but are not explicitly deemed unlawful. Furthermore, compliance means we accept the status quo i.e., that over 37,000 people are killed every year because it is the consequence of current laws.

To achieve higher levels of safety, individuals need to go beyond compliance to commitment – a commitment to safety for themselves and others. A commitment to safety means committing to avoiding risk as well as committing to taking actions to keep safe.

This commitment can be demonstrated by engaging in proactive traffic safety.

EXAMPLES OF PROACTIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY INCLUDE...

- Supporting existing traffic safety efforts
- Staying informed of traffic-related issues
- Planning a safe way to go home before drinking alcohol
- Speaking up about other people’s unsafe behaviors like not wearing a seat belt or driving distracted
- Establishing family rules about always wearing a seat belt, never texting while driving, or never riding with someone who has been drinking alcohol
- Establishing a workplace policy like always wearing a seat belt in a company vehicle

WHY SHOULD WE GROW PROACTIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY?

Growing proactive traffic safety:

- Creates a shared commitment to safety
- Encourages proactive behaviors that support safety efforts
- Encourages proactive behaviors that extend beyond one’s own safety to support the safety of others
- Expands the focus of safety efforts to include the large group of safe road users as a way to influence the small group in risky behaviors
- Enhances existing Strategic Highway Safety Planning efforts

IMPLEMENTATION

Proactive traffic safety is a new opportunity to improve traffic safety. A primer is available to help traffic safety professionals grow proactive traffic safety.

Additional tips to grow proactive traffic safety include:

Tip #1. Think in Terms of Allies and Partners. Consider:
- Who are my allies in promoting traffic safety?
- Who can help me introduce a new idea to other key stakeholders?
- With whom can I partner?
- Who has a direct stake in growing proactive traffic safety?

Tip #2. Engage Others About Proactive Traffic Safety.


Tip #4. Think about Having a Meeting, Providing a Presentation, and/or Facilitating a Conversation about Proactive Traffic Safety.

Tip #5. Use the Available Communication Tools.

- Proactive Traffic Safety Primer
- Proactive Traffic Safety PowerPoint Presentation
- Conversation Guide


Depending on your state’s process, how you integrate proactive traffic safety into your Strategic Highway Safety Plan might look different. I have some ideas:

- Add a chapter on proactive traffic safety into your Strategic Highway Safety Plan.
- Develop principles of communication with proactive traffic safely in mind and add it to your communication plan as part of the plan.
- Identify strategies within the Strategic Highway Safety Plans that address high risk behaviors and consider augmenting these strategies with proactive traffic safety.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Project URL: https://www.montana.gov/transportation/HopTrafSafety-sc-tools.shtml

Montana Department of Transportation
Center for Health & Safety Culture
CONCLUSION

- Traffic safety professionals and stakeholders must continue to evolve and seek innovative ways to reduce risky driver behaviors and increase safer behaviors.

- Growing proactive traffic safety cultivates a traffic safety culture where people commit to a safer transportation system.

- Growing proactive traffic safety behaviors is a new opportunity to strategically address risky traffic behaviors and ultimately achieve and sustain our Towards Zero Deaths goals.
Contact Us

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