

# Emphasis Area Work Plan



# Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan



## ***Roadway Departure & Intersection Crashes Purpose, Strategies, and Implementation Steps***

Based on the available crash data, partner input, effectiveness, FHWA's Nine Proven Countermeasures,<sup>1</sup> and consideration of feasibility, priority strategies and implementation steps to reduce roadway departure and intersection crashes are defined on the following pages.

1

### *Reduce and mitigate roadway departure crashes through data-driven problem identification and the use of best practices.*

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#### **Purpose**

Engineering countermeasures have proven to be very effective at reducing roadway departure crashes. In general, these treatments seek to keep the vehicle from leaving the roadway, or mitigate the impact of doing so. Countermeasures may be implemented in locations with a roadway departure crash history or where roadway departure risk factors are present. MDT's Roadway Departure Plan will use analysis to identify rural roadways with a higher than normal crash rate and define evidence-based strategies to address the issues. Based on input from local jurisdictions and tribes, on an ongoing basis MDT will continue to conduct analysis of locations identified as having safety issues and define potential infrastructure solutions. Road Safety Audits also will be conducted as appropriate to comprehensively evaluate safety issues from a multidisciplinary perspective. As research into proven effective best practices is ongoing, MDT will monitor the safety literature to identify potential technologies for application in Montana.

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#### **Implementation Steps**

- Implement MDT's Roadway Departure Plan including systemic and hot spot treatments on rural state routes.
- Construct infrastructure improvements to mitigate road departure crashes, both on and off the state system. Examples include but are not limited to: shoulder rumble strips; centerline rumble strips; signage and delineation; wider shoulders; flatter slopes; high-friction surfacing; geometric improvements; intelligent transportation system solutions; variable message signing; clear zone improvements; and guardrail improvements.
- Evaluate new roadway departure prevention technologies on an ongoing basis for applicability to Montana's roadways.
- Conduct Road Safety Audits on corridors or locations identified as having safety issues and implement appropriate recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/legislationandpolicy/policy/memo071008/npccacsc/>.

## 2

### *Reduce and mitigate speed-related roadway departure/intersection crashes*

#### **Purpose**

The faster a vehicle is traveling when it crashes the greater the chance of a severe injury to the occupants, especially if they are not wearing a restraint. Montana is evaluating whether the current differential speed limit (different speed limits for cars and trucks) has a positive or negative safety impact. Once the results of that research are available MDT will evaluate potential recommendations for changes. The speed limits posted on the roadways are determined to be safe under normal conditions but drivers routinely exceed the limits and drive too fast during inclement weather. Speed enforcement should be targeted to areas where speeding is common and there is a history of severe crashes.

#### **Implementation Steps**

- Complete the “Safety Impact of Differential Speed Limits on Rural Two-Lane Highways in Montana” research study and consider implementation of appropriate recommendations.
- Support targeted enforcement based on demonstrated crash patterns and high-risk drivers.



# 3

## *Reduce roadway departure and intersection crashes through education*

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### **Purpose**

To increase knowledge of safe driving practices and help prevent unsafe driving behavior, education and awareness campaigns are a critical piece of the safety puzzle. After obtaining their driver's license most people never obtain any continuing driver education. However, evidence-based skills training courses are available and drivers should be encouraged to refresh their skills. New types of infrastructure elements, signs, and striping are integrated on the roadway system as new research on technologies and safety outcomes becomes available, but most people only learn about these new elements as they encounter them on the roadway. Public education to inform people of how to navigate new types of roadway infrastructure will be conducted as needed. In addition, many times people know how they should be driving but choose to take risks, drive aggressively, or not fully focus on driving. It is a constant challenge to help people take seriously the true risk they expose themselves and others to when operating a vehicle on the roadway. Awareness programs must reach the right people with the right message to affect their behavior and research to help define those messages is needed.

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### **Implementation Steps**

- Enhance awareness of and encourage increased participation of evidence-based roadway user skills training.
- Research underlying beliefs and behaviors of high-risk groups to better understand them; develop and implement strategies by using the appropriate proven and innovative educational materials and outreach communication channels.
- Conduct public awareness and education about roadway conditions, operations and management strategies, such as yellow flashing signals, roundabouts, bicycle lanes, pedestrian signals, operations around EMS responders, and right-of-way rules at stop-controlled and uncontrolled intersections.
- Promote and support evidence-based teen peer-to-peer education and programs to address risky driving behavior, including the consequences of distracted driving, impaired driving, and not using seat belts, among others.

# 4

## *Reduce and mitigate intersection crashes through data-driven problem identification and the use of best practices*

### **Purpose**

MDT's intersection safety plan will use analytical techniques to identify intersection types where specific crash patterns exist or where severe crashes are more likely to occur based on infrastructure characteristics and define potential solutions – addressing intersection safety in a proactive manner. Additionally, on an ongoing basis, using input on safety issues, all roadway jurisdictions will identify specific locations where improvements may be needed, conduct analysis, and define and implement solutions.

### **Implementation Steps**

- Develop and implement an intersection safety plan.
- Construct infrastructure improvements to mitigate intersection-related crashes. Examples include but are not limited to: turn lanes; signal phasing/timing; flashing yellow arrows; retroreflective backplates on signals; sight distance improvements; roundabouts or other intersection control improvements; pedestrian improvements, including improvements at midblock crossings; bicycle improvements; signal coordination and timing improvements; enhanced/improved lighting; or enhanced/improved signing.



## 5

### *Support and increase enforcement of proper road use behaviors by all users in high-crash corridors and high-crash locations*

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#### **Purpose**

A primary way to change driver behavior is through enforcement of safe driving. The goal of issuing citations and fines to those who violate statutes and exhibit risky behavior is to change behavior. Data analysis and input from law enforcement is invaluable to identifying locations where enforcement is needed. Those locations also may be targeted for infrastructure upgrades to facilitate increased enforcement, such as LED lights on the back of traffic signals so law enforcement can clearly see the signal color from the other side of the intersection and enforce red-light running.

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#### **Implementation Steps**

- Implement technologies and equipment to aid law enforcement in conducting enforcement.
- Implement and support targeted enforcement efforts to prevent intersection and roadway departure crashes.

## 6

### *Explore and implement best practices for reducing road departure, such as distracted driving and fatigued driving, in addition to other behavioral factors*

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#### **Purpose**

Behavior change may result from enforcement, education, or a response to infrastructure. For example, distracted or fatigued driving can be addressed through rumble strips that alert a driver (who might be talking on a cell phone or falling asleep) that they are leaving the travel lane; law enforcement could stop a vehicle for careless driving upon noting erratic movement on the roadway; or an education campaign might convince a driver that it is just not worth the risk to answer a call while driving or that they should pull over to rest when overly fatigued. New technology and research is continually emerging to address behavioral issues. With this strategy, Montana will continually monitor safety literature to evaluate emerging strategies with a proven safety benefit and consider implementation, if appropriate.

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#### **Implementation Steps**

- Implementation steps to be determined as best practices are identified.

# 7

## *Improve the prosecution and adjudication of all roadway user violations*

### **Purpose**

Law enforcement resources are limited. When a citation is issued or an arrest made, the expectation is that the violator will pay a price for unsafe behavior. However, a case can result in dismissal for a variety of reasons, including poor collection of evidence, errors in the crash record, dismissal of a traffic infraction as part of a plea agreement involving multiple offenses, or inaccurate data in the court records system. To ensure that all participants in the process of adjudicating a traffic offense handle the case in the correct way so the violator receives the appropriate penalty, increased training is needed about key steps in the process, loopholes, and common errors. In this way every hour officers spend out on the road will be more efficient because more penalties will actually result from their work. Increased behavior change is likely to result.

### **Implementation Steps**

- Increase education and training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and the judiciary to ensure consistent citing and adjudication of traffic offenses and consideration of alternative sentencing (i.e., safety education).



## ***Roadway Departure and Intersection Crashes Implementation Partners***

A wide range of safety partner agencies has been identified to support or provide leadership in implementing roadway departure and intersection crashes strategies.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AAA</li><li>• AARP</li><li>• Bike Walk Montana</li><li>• Community Partners</li><li>• Courts and Judges</li><li>• Local Communities</li><li>• Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)</li><li>• Local (City, County, and Tribal) Law Enforcement</li><li>• Local School Administrators</li><li>• Montana Office of Public Instruction – Traffic Education</li><li>• Department of Public Health and Human Services</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Montana Behavioral Initiative</li><li>• Montana Department of Labor and Industry - WorkSafeMT</li><li>• Montana Department of Transportation – Engineering</li><li>• Montana Department of Transportation -- Motor Carrier Services</li><li>• Montana Department of Transportation – Planning Division</li><li>• Montana Department of Transportation – State Highway Traffic Safety Section</li><li>• Department of Justice – Montana Highway Patrol</li><li>• Montana Motorcycle Rider Safety (MMRS)</li><li>• Department of Justice – Montana State Crime Lab</li><li>• Traffic Safety Resource Partners</li></ul>
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## ***Roadway Departure and Intersection Crashes Objectives***

Objectives for the Roadway Departure and Intersection Crashes Emphasis Area are defined as follows:

- Reduction in number of roadway departure crash fatalities;
- Reduction in roadway departure crash serious injuries;
- Reduction in number of intersection crash fatalities;
- Reduction in number of intersection serious injuries.



## ***Impaired Driving Crashes***

### ***Purpose, Strategies, and Implementation Steps***

*\*The work plan may be updated based on the recommendations from Montana's 2016 Impaired Driving Assessment.*

Based on the available crash data, partner input, effectiveness data (including review of Countermeasures That Work<sup>1</sup>) and consideration of feasibility, priority strategies and implementation steps to reduce impaired driving fatalities and serious injuries are defined below.

# 1

## ***Reduce impaired driving through improved processes and regulations***

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### **Purpose**

Having the right regulations in place and ensuring they are effectively implemented has a large impact on whether impaired driving is prevented, impaired drivers are caught, and their cases are properly adjudicated so they do not repeat their offense. For example, a statewide social host law would help prevent private gatherings where alcohol is knowingly served to minors by an adult. Additionally, while there is a law requiring mandatory training of alcohol sellers and servers, compliance is not comprehensively enforced, and often servers at special events are not trained, so increased awareness of the training requirement is needed. In order to be able to conduct sobriety checkpoints, which are a proven effective deterrent to impaired driving, this technique needs to be codified in state statute.

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### **Implementation Steps**

- Support stronger impaired driving laws that increase penalties and/or arrest rates, including those focusing on repeat offenders.
- Support efforts to reduce the over-service of alcohol by expanding the awareness and support of continued mandatory alcohol sales and service training, including special events training and state permitting of alcohol servers and sellers. Research and implement methods for tracking participation and compliance.
- Support efforts to develop local and a statewide social host law.
- Support efforts to allow sobriety checkpoints in statute.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ghsa.org/html/publications/countermeasures.html>

## 2

## *Reduce impaired driving through enforcement*

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### **Purpose**

Aggressive ongoing enforcement is key to getting impaired drivers off the road. Impaired driving includes use of drugs as well as alcohol, and specific training is available to help officers recognize drug-impaired drivers: Drug Recognition Expert. It is critical to ensure sufficient training programs are available and the numbers of officers trained is maintained. To ensure enforcement of impaired driving is conducted in the most effective way possible, it is critical to maintain law enforcement liaison positions, which manage and coordinate impaired driving law enforcement campaigns with state and local law enforcement agencies.

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### **Implementation Steps**

- Sustain Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) and related training, and increase collaboration between DREs and law enforcement agencies.
- Support targeted enforcement based on demonstrated crash patterns and/or high-risk drivers (i.e., Selective Traffic Enforcement Program).
- Support local and state law enforcement efforts that include, but are not limited to, High-Visibility Enforcement.
- Sustain Law Enforcement Liaison program
- Support and encourage law enforcement agencies to enforce the criminal violation of the seller or server of over-service of alcohol, and report the violation of alcohol over service to the Department of Revenue (DOR) for administrative action on the liquor license holder.
- Identify and support implementation of existing or new alcohol and drug detection technologies.

# 3

## *Reduce impaired road users through prevention education*

### **Purpose**

Preventing people from making the unsafe choice to drive while impaired is the ultimate goal. Public education campaigns are a centerpiece of DUI prevention activities but they must involve messages that resonate with the people who are most at risk of choosing to drive impaired. Therefore, increased research into underlying beliefs and behaviors is necessary so messages can be crafted that will effectively influence people to change their behavior and stop driving impaired. This effort may involve developing “social norming” messages that communicate how the majority of Montanans are NOT driving impaired and that the culture of the state does not tolerate that behavior.

### **Implementation Steps**

- Monitor the impact of marijuana legalization on roadway crashes and countermeasures in peer states.
- Develop public education campaigns on a range of impaired driving topics.
- Research underlying beliefs and behaviors of high-risk groups to better understand them; develop and implement strategies by using the appropriate proven and innovative educational materials and outreach communication channels.



# 4

## *Continue to support and build collaborative partnerships to reduce impaired driving*

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### **Purpose**

Reduction of impaired driving requires extensive collaboration to ensure cases are handled appropriately from the time a driver is stopped on the road through the court system and ensuring sanctions are effectively administered. To provide oversight and ensure all these elements are continuously improved and coordinated, establishment of a statewide DUI Task Force will be useful. To make sure the right evidence is collected in the field and procedures are followed so that DUI and Minor in Possession (MIP) cases can be prosecuted effectively, training is needed for the individuals involved at each phase. Repeat offenders are a significant problem, and while proven effective strategies exist to keep them off the road, these strategies must be implemented consistently.

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### **Implementation Steps**

- Increase the number of drug and alcohol courts and provide training to judges and court personnel.
- Increase proven effective training for law enforcement, judges and prosecutors to ensure consistent adjudication of all traffic offenses, including impaired driving violations.
- Support development of a statewide DUI Task Force.
- Increase usage of the 24/7 DUI monitoring program and other programs to prevent repeat offenses (i.e., ignition interlock).
- Support increase of crime lab resources to improve crime lab capacity and speed, including the number of toxicologists and equipment to process DUI test samples and measure other drugs.
- Support increased compliance with mandatory alcohol/drug treatment, and an increase in alcohol and drug abuse treatment options, to prevent repeat DUI offenses.
- Support and promote training for criminal justice professionals and medical staff regarding best practices and legal requirements on topics such as BAC draws.
- Improve MIP (minor-in-possession) processes in Montana (i.e., consistent management of cases in Youth Court and Criminal Justice Court) based on best practices. Improve data reporting to court partner agencies, such as alcohol education and intervention.

A wide range of safety partner agencies has been identified to support or provide leadership in implementing impaired driving crashes strategies.

### ***Impaired Driving Crashes Implementation Partners***

Colleges and Universities	Montana Department of Labor and Industry – WorkSafeMT
Common Sense Coalition	
Courts and Judges	Montana Department of Transportation – Motor Carrier Services
DUI Task Forces	Montana Department of Transportation – Planning
Local (City, County, and Tribal) Law Enforcement Agencies	Montana Department of Transportation – State Highway Traffic Safety Section
Local Communities and Businesses	Montana Office of Public Instruction – Traffic Education
City-County Health Departments	Montana Sheriff and Peace Officers Association
MHP Law Enforcement Liaisons	Montana State Crime Lab – Department of Justice
Montana Department of Labor and Industry	Office of Court Administrators
Montana County Attorney Association	Registered Alcohol Sales and Service Trainers
Montana Department of Public Health and Human Service – Addictive and Mental Disorders	Safe on All Roads (SOAR)
Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services – Injury Prevention	Montana Tavern Association
Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services – Prevention Resources	Traffic Safety Resource Partners
Montana Department of Revenue – Liquor Control	

### ***Impaired Driving Crashes Emphasis Area Objectives***

Objective Measures for the Impaired Driving Crashes Emphasis Area are defined as follows:

- Reduction in number of impaired driving fatalities; and
- Reduction in number of impaired driving serious injuries.



## ***Occupant Protection Purpose, Strategies, and Implementation Steps***

Based on the available crash data, partner input, effectiveness (including review of *Countermeasures that Work*), and consideration of feasibility, priority strategies, and action steps are defined below.

1

### ***Support policies, education, training, programs, and activities that promote and increase seat belt and child safety seat use***

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#### **Purpose**

Use of a safety belt has the potential to turn a severe crash into one that results in a less severe injury or from which the passengers walk away unharmed. The key is to get people to wear seat belts every time they get in a vehicle. Virtually everyone knows that they should wear a seatbelt. The question is how to change the behavior of the more than 20 percent of the population that does not buckle up. Adoption of a primary safety belt law so law enforcement can stop drivers for that offense alone would make a significant difference in belt use rates, based on data from other states that have undergone this change. In Montana, passage of a primary safety belt law could save 20 to 30 lives each year. Increasing the penalty for a citation to \$100 or more would communicate that Montana takes nonuse of a restraint seriously. New educational materials will need to communicate effective messages that will reach the right population and can change behavior. Partnering with employers to influence their employees to wear safety belts make sense as that is a way to reach large numbers of people and employers can influence their employees, particularly regarding policies for driving on the job.

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#### **Implementation Steps**

- Support enhancement and implementation of mandatory minor (under 18 years of age) occupant protection laws per best practices and GDL requirements.
- Support efforts from safety partners and stakeholders to implement a primary seatbelt law.
- Support increasing the current seat belt penalty of \$20 to be consistent with the \$100 penalty for the child passenger safety restraint law.
- Promote local jurisdictional adoption of a primary seat belt ordinance if appropriate.
- Encourage state agencies and employers to coordinate and implement workplace traffic safety policies to include seat belt use and other traffic safety measures. Develop a state Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) or similar public-private partnership focused on traffic safety.
- Research underlying beliefs and behaviors of high-risk groups to better understand them; develop and implement strategies by using the appropriate proven and innovative educational materials and outreach communication channels.
- Develop child passenger safety educational materials with updated and consistent information.
- Sustain and strengthen the National Child Passenger Safety Certification Training Program with increased focus on high-risk populations.

## 2

### *Support enforcement of existing seat belt and child passenger safety laws*

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#### **Purpose**

The Montana Seatbelt Use Act requires the use of seatbelts by the driver and each occupant of a vehicle. State law also requires child safety restraint systems for children under the age of 6 and weighing less than 60 pounds. However, law enforcement may issue a citation for restraint nonuse only when the driver has been stopped for another reason. Issuance of increased citations for seat belt nonuse can change behavior. To ensure proper adjudication of safety belt offenses, it is important that all parties with a role in the process be properly trained. In addition, alternative sentencing that would result in improved behavior change should be considered.

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#### **Implementation Steps**

- Increase education and training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and the judiciary to ensure consistent citing and adjudication of occupant protection offenses and consideration of alternative sentencing (i.e., safety education).
- Support targeted enforcement based on demonstrated crash patterns and high-risk drivers.

## 3

### *Continue to support and build collaborative partnerships to increase seat belt use*

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#### **Purpose**

Because young drivers and passengers have low seat belt use rates, outreach programs should be enhanced and developed to focus on changing behavior of young people. A change now has the potential to save many years of productive life ahead by avoiding severe injury in a crash. Partnering with institutions where people already have a relationship offers the potential for more efficient and effective programs.

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#### **Implementation Steps**

- Develop public and private partnerships (i.e., elementary, high school, and colleges) to develop and disseminate information and educational programs regarding unsafe driving behaviors.

# 4

## Evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing messages, campaigns, and programs in promoting and/or increasing occupant protection use

### Purpose

Educational campaigns have been used in Montana for many years with the objective of increasing seat belt use. However, for the past five years belt use rates have not only stalled but decreased slightly. Montana needs to take a hard look at the messages being used to reach high-risk populations and make changes where needed to effect behavior change and get seat belt use rates to increase.

### Implementation Steps

- To be determined once current campaigns have been evaluated.

### Occupant Protection Implementation Partners

A wide range of safety partner agencies has been identified to support or provide leadership in implementing occupant protection strategies.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buckle Up Montana Coordinators</li><li>• Child Passenger Seat instructors and technicians</li><li>• Local Community and Businesses</li><li>• Courts and Judges</li><li>• Local School Administrators</li><li>• City-County Health Departments</li><li>• Local (City, County, and Tribal) Law Enforcement</li><li>• Montana Department of Labor and Industry – WorkSafeMT</li><li>• Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services - Injury Prevention</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Department of Justice – Montana Highway Patrol Montana</li><li>• Office of Public Instruction - Traffic Education</li><li>• Montana Department of Transportation – Planning Division</li><li>• Montana Department of Transportation – Motor Carrier Services</li><li>• Montana Department of Transportation – State Highway Traffic Safety Section</li><li>• Safe on All Roads (SOAR)</li><li>• Traffic Safety Resource Partners</li></ul>
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### Occupant Protection Objectives

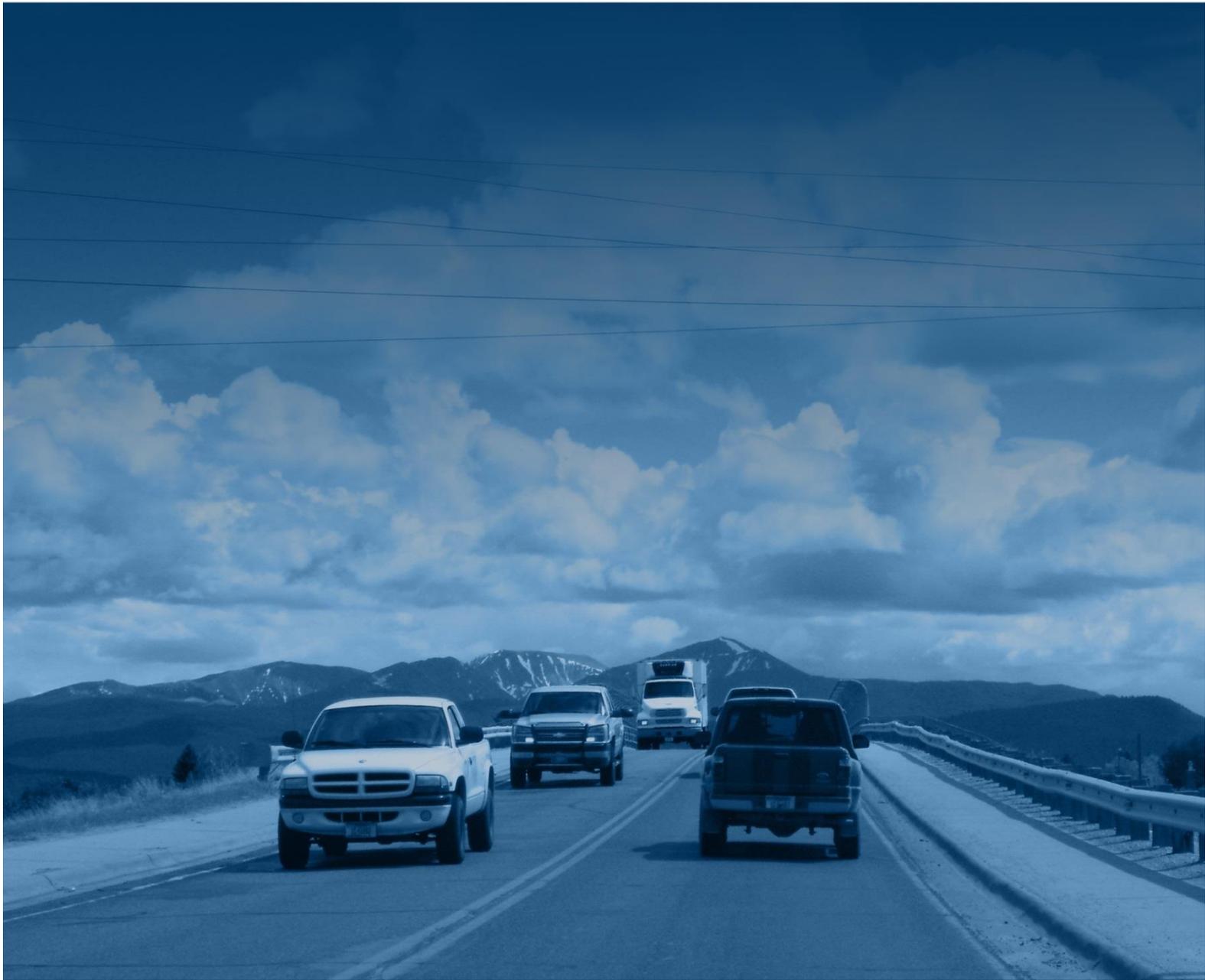
Objectives for the Occupant Protection Emphasis Area are defined as follows and will be tracked annually:

Reduction in number of unrestrained occupant fatalities.

Reduction in number of unrestrained occupant serious injuries.

# #VisionZeroMT

zero deaths | zero serious injuries



MONTANA  
**MDT** ★  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION