

Delaware Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Virtual Public Workshop

Video/Slide Show Script

Slide 1.

Hello and thank you for your interest in the 2020 update to the Delaware Strategic Highway Safety Plan, or SHSP. The SHSP Core Committee Agencies, comprised of the Delaware Department of Transportation, Delaware Office of Highway Safety and Delaware State Police, began work on updating Delaware's SHSP earlier this year. The purpose of this workshop is to present the 2020 SHSP proposed goal, objective and Emphasis Areas and solicit stakeholder and public comment on suggested strategies for inclusion in the 2020 SHSP. After watching this video, please review the additional information provided on the virtual public workshop webpage and provide your feedback using the online survey. More information on the survey will be provided at the end of this presentation.

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This is an overview of the presentation. We will provide an introduction to Delaware's SHSP and why an update is necessary. Next, we will review the proposed goal and objective for the 2020 SHSP and review the proposed emphasis areas. Last, we will review the development schedule for the plan and discuss the survey.

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A Strategic Highway Safety Plan is a comprehensive data driven transportation safety plan. The goal is to reduce highway fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The Federal Highway Administration mandates that each state have a Strategic Highway Safety Plan and that federally-funded safety projects be consistent with a states' SHSP. The main purpose of an SHSP is to establish consistent statewide goals and objectives, have data driven emphasis areas and coordinate with safety stakeholders and other transportation plans including other state safety plans, projects and programs; Capital Transportation Programs; and the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Priorities are set based on crash and other available traffic and safety data. An SHSP is designed to address engineering, education, enforcement and emergency medical services strategies to improve highway safety – generally referred to as the 4 E's of Highway Safety.

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The Federal Highway Administration requires that a states' SHSP be updated at least every 5 years. As Delaware concludes year five of the current SHSP, it is now time to evaluate the current goals and objectives and ensure that they are being met; or determine if they need to be adjusted based on current data trends. Recent data trends are reviewed to determine if chosen emphasis areas remain appropriate or if there are new patterns that may suggest a change in where and how safety improvements and programs are prioritized and implemented. A plan update also provides for the opportunity to revise strategies and action plans ensuring that the latest innovative safety strategies are being utilized.

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Delaware adopted their first Strategic Highway Safety Plan in 2006 and has been implementing various strategies ever since, with the goal of enhancing safety on Delaware's roadways. Over time, the Delaware SHSP has been updated, either in response to identified changes in crash data trends or because of Federal requirements to periodically update the plan. Delaware's current plan was adopted in December of 2015. As we update the Delaware SHSP in 2020, the Core Committee Agencies would like to reach out to our identified stakeholders and the public to obtain feedback on the proposed goal, objective and Emphasis Areas, solicit feedback on safety strategies, and seek volunteers for Emphasis Area Teams.

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The committee structure of the Delaware SHSP is comprised of a Core Committee including the Delaware Department of Transportation - DelDOT, Office of Highway Safety – OHS and Delaware State Police - DSP and a Stakeholder Committee comprised of other state and Federal transportation safety partners, as required by Federal transportation legislation.

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The SHSP is a data-driven plan so understanding recent data trends is important. This chart shows the trend of fatalities and serious injuries on Delaware's roadways between 2005 and 2019. Fatalities are represented by the blue bars and have averaged 120 annually since 2005, fluctuating between just over 100 to a high of 147. Serious injuries are represented by the orange bars and have averaged 608 annually since 2005. More recently, the number of serious injuries has declined. This reduction may partially be attributed to the federally-mandated change in serious injury definition which law enforcement officers use to classify crashes, which was implemented in Delaware at the end of September 2017.

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The 2015 SHSP included a goal, or "mission" as it was termed at the time, to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on Delaware's roadways through a multi-agency approach that utilizes education, enforcement, engineering and emergency medical services strategies. The goal of eliminating fatalities and serious injuries remains a primary focus of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan and the Core Committee, therefore, the Core Committee decided to retain it for the 2020 SHSP.

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The objective set in 2015, or "goal" as it was termed then, called for the reduction of fatalities by 3 annually and serious injuries by 15 annually. Additional information regarding the 2015 objective and progress towards achieving that objective is contained in the Additional Information section on the Virtual Public Workshop webpage.

When the Core Committee met this Spring to discuss setting the objective for the 2020 plan, various trendlines were evaluated to determine an appropriate objective. The Core Committee agreed on a measurable objective to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by 15% over the next five years, measured from the average number of fatalities and serious injuries during the five-year period from 2015 through 2019. The following charts illustrate what this objective looks like over the next five years for combined fatalities and serious injuries and for fatalities and serious injuries separately.

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This chart represents the annual objective for fatalities and serious injuries combined, based on a 15% reduction over the next five years. The objective is measured from a baseline of 606 combined fatalities and serious injuries, calculated from the average of the 2015 through 2019 crash data. The objective to be reached at the end of the five-year plan period is no more than 515 combined fatalities and serious injuries.

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This next chart represents the annual objective for fatalities only, based on a 15% reduction over the next five years. The average number of fatalities from 2015 through 2019 is 123, setting the baseline for the 2020 SHSP fatalities objective. The objective at the end of the five-year plan period is no more than 105 fatalities.

Slide 12.

This chart represents the annual objective for serious injuries only, based on a 15% reduction over the next five years. The average number of serious injuries from 2015 through 2019 is 483, setting the baseline for the 2020 SHSP serious injuries objective. The objective at the end of the five-year plan period is no more than 411 serious injuries.

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Emphasis areas establish the priorities for safety improvements and programs on Delaware's roadways. An emphasis area can focus on a specific crash type such as intersection crashes or roadway departure crashes; different populations of road users such as pedestrians, younger drivers or older drivers; or driver behaviors such as impaired driving, unrestrained motorists or speeding. The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials, or AASHTO, who provides technical guidance and standards development to state departments of transportation, identified 22 emphasis areas for states to consider when developing their SHSPs. Emphasis areas are intended to address the 4 E's of safety: engineering, education, enforcement and emergency medical services.

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Fatality and serious injury crash data was reviewed between 2015 through 2019 for each potential emphasis area and ranked by percentages of the total fatalities and serious injuries. Those Emphasis Areas with the highest percentages of combined fatalities and serious injuries were considered for inclusion in the 2020 SHSP. The SHSP Core Committee proposes to include Intersections, Distracted Driving, Impaired Driving, Roadway Departure, Pedestrians, Motorcycles, Unrestrained Motorists, Speeding and Traffic Records as Emphasis Areas for the 2020 SHSP.

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Except for the addition of Distracted Driving, the proposed Emphasis Areas match those from the 2015 SHSP. Speeding as a contributing factor is underrepresented in the crash data and the Core Committee recognizes that higher speeds increase crash severity. For this reason, Speeding will remain as an Emphasis Area. One non data-driven emphasis area related to traffic records will also be retained from the 2015 SHSP. This emphasis area has been included in Delaware's SHSP since its inception, identifying the need to continue to focus on safety data quality and accuracy.

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We are seeking both stakeholder and public feedback regarding the proposed goal and objective as well as the proposed emphasis areas for the 2020 SHSP. In addition, we are seeking suggestions on strategies that should be included in the 2020 SHSP. Strategies that may be included in the 2020 SHSP will focus on engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency medical services activities that promote reductions in crashes and improve safety. Additionally, recommendations on policy changes can be considered as strategies for improving roadway safety. These strategies will form the basis for action plans that will be developed during the implementation of the SHSP over the next five years. Finally, as we continue development of the 2020 SHSP, emphasis area teams will be formed and we are seeking volunteers. You may indicate on the survey form if you are interested in being included in a particular emphasis area team. Please indicate those emphasis areas for which you have interest, choosing up to three. Final selection of Emphasis Area Team members will be determined by the SHSP Core Committee and due to the size of the Emphasis Area teams, not everyone may be selected. A link to the survey is on the virtual public workshop webpage, located to the left of the video link.

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Each Emphasis Area Team will review crash data for their respective emphasis area, identify strategies to be included in the 2020 SHSP, and after adoption of the 2020 SHSP, the Emphasis Area Teams will be retained to develop action plans for their emphasis areas.

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The process for updating the SHSP started earlier this year with the review of crash data, the setting of the proposed goal and objective and the selection of proposed emphasis areas. Throughout the summer, we will be holding emphasis area team meetings. These meetings will be held virtually. At the same time, the updated plan will be written with a draft plan being presented to the stakeholder committee in the Fall. Finally, the plan will then be formally adopted and made publicly available in December 2020.

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On behalf of the SHSP Core Committee, we would like to thank you for your interest in the update to Delaware's Strategic Highway Safety Plan and your interest in safety on Delaware's roadways. Please review the virtual workshop webpage for additional information and complete the workshop survey form, which will be available until July 7, 2020.