MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS
and
OUTREACH PLAN
for the
FHWA
SAFETY PROGRAM
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMUNICATIONS BUILDING BLOCKS AND TOOLS
*Intended for general distribution.*

1. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................................1

2. COMMUNICATIONS BUILDING BLOCKS ..............................................................................................3
   Key Messages ...............................................................................................................................................3
   Talking Points ................................................................................................................................................4
   Branding ........................................................................................................................................................6

3. COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS ...................................................................................................................7
   Planning Workbook .......................................................................................................................................7
1. INTRODUCTION

In order to strengthen and better coordinate the FHWA Safety Program’s Marketing, Communications, and Outreach efforts, new tools and processes have been developed for use by the FHWA Safety staff. These include Key Messages, Talking Points, Program-wide Branding, the Planning Workbook, and the FHWA Safety Program topic-based formatted website.

**Key Messages.** By consistently integrating uniform Key Messages into presentations, publications, and web content, the FHWA Safety Program staff can sharpen the focus of its outreach activities and more effectively communicate with customers and partners.

The following three key messages succinctly express the core mission of the FHWA Safety Program, and two fundamental strategies for achieving the mission. The mission explains “WHAT” the FHWA Safety Program does, and the fundamental strategies express “HOW.”

- **Safe Roads for a Safer Future** (core mission)
- Focus on Safety Data (fundamental strategy)
- Working Together to Save Lives (fundamental strategy)

**Talking Points.** Talking Points for the Key Messages are provided on pages 5-6. These Talking Points can and should be tailored to the specific occasion and audience. It is recommended that the FHWA Safety Program managers promote use of the Talking Points by all FHWA Safety Program staff in their presentations, on the web sites, and in marketing and outreach materials.

**Branding.** Adoption of an FHWA Safety Program slogan, tag line and graphic treatment will integrate the various safety products and marketing materials under a unified Brand. Shown on page 7 (Part 1), the Branding will be used on all products, web sites, publications, presentations, and other marketing materials.

**Planning Workbook.** The Planning Workbook has been delivered as a separate document, entitled *Steps to Success in Highway Safety Communications: FHWA Highway Safety Marketing, Communications & Outreach Decision Support Tool #1: Planning Workbook*. The Planning Workbook is designed to enable users to:

- Plan marketing, communications and outreach activities at the project, product and program levels.
- Think through planning decisions like a marketing, communications and outreach professional.
- Access knowledge and information relevant to FHWA safety marketing, communications and outreach.

Part I of the Planning Workbook steps users through the planning process; Part II contains Information and Guidance. The Planning Workbook is not just for engineers, or researchers, or planners or management—it is intended to help safety staff from all disciplines increase their skills and knowledge regarding communications and outreach. While the Planning Workbook was designed specifically for the FHWA Safety Program, much of the content is of use to anyone planning a highway-safety-related marketing, communications and outreach activity or program. The guidance also may be useful for marketing, communications and outreach planning for other, non-safety FHWA programs.
The Introduction to the *Planning Workbook* states clearly that . . .

- The tool is intended to provide guidance and help.
- Not all of the guidance or help will be applicable to every project, product or program.
- Staff is encouraged to use what they can; there are no right or wrong answers.

At the same time, the *Planning Workbook* encourages FHWA Safety Program staff to seek the answers to the questions listed in Checklist 1 in order to ensure that FHWA's marketing, communications and outreach resources are used effectively.

**CHECKLIST 1. BASIC ELEMENTS OF MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH PLANS**

- What are the major **benefits** of my product or program for the customers or partners?
- What are the major **drawbacks (market barriers)** for the customers or partners?
- What's my **message** (how do I communicate the benefits and overcome the barriers)?
- **Who are the customers or partners** I must reach in order to effectively promote the product or program? How can I **gain input** from them? What are the **most effective** tools and techniques for reaching them?
- What **trade or professional organizations** represent these customers? How can the FHWA work with them to promote this product or program?
- Who are the product or program **champions**? How can they help?
- What is the **plan for distribution** of marketing and outreach tools, once they are developed? What actions need to be taken? What's the schedule? How will distribution be tracked?
- How will I know when I have succeeded in achieving my marketing, communications and outreach objective? What is my **goal**? How am I **tracking progress**?

The *Planning Workbook* does not replace the need for involvement of marketing, communications and outreach professionals. It is expected that, after they are trained by professionals in the use of the *Planning Workbook*, the FHWA Safety Program staff will be able to develop project-level plans with minimal assistance. Preparation of program-area-level plans will still require some assistance by marketing, communications and outreach professionals, although it is anticipated that other staff will be able to develop a significant portion of these plans on their own, and it will be easier for professionals to work efficiently with the FHWA Safety Program staff after they have become familiar with the process, concepts and terms that the *Planning Workbook* presents. It is anticipated that the Program-wide plans will continue to be prepared by marketing, communications and outreach professionals under the direction of Program leadership.

**Web Enhancements.** A topic-based website overhaul to help consolidate information making more effective use of one of the FHWA Safety Program's greatest communications assets, the Internet, will be an ongoing effort.
2. COMMUNICATIONS BUILDING BLOCKS

The FHWA Safety Program has an opportunity to greatly increase the effectiveness of its marketing, communications and outreach activities by expressing its core mission and fundamental strategies in a small number of crisp, uniform messages that the general public can readily grasp. By delivering these priority messages consistently across all FHWA Safety Programs, both internally and externally, the FHWA Safety Program and its communications and outreach activities will gain focus and coordination.

Key Messages

The following three key messages succinctly express the core mission of the FHWA Safety Program, and two fundamental strategies for achieving the mission. The mission explains “WHAT” the FHWA Safety Program does, and the fundamental strategies express “HOW.”

- **Safe Roads for a Safer Future** (core mission)

- **Focus on Safety Data** (fundamental strategy)

- **Working Together to Save Lives** (fundamental strategy)

**Safe Roads for a Safer Future** — The FHWA Safety mission is to reduce highway fatalities by making our roads safer through a data-driven, systematic approach and addressing all “4Es” of safety: engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency medical services. Increasing awareness of the need for roadway safety infrastructure improvements is very important. We are striving to provide decision-makers important information, tools, and resources that will improve the safety performance of roadways. Safety should be considered first, every time, and at every stage of a project. Make safety your first consideration in every investment decision.

**Focus on Safety Data** — The FHWA Safety Program advocates a data-driven strategic approach to improving roadway safety. The FHWA Safety Program encourages state and local agencies to focus on implementing countermeasures to prevent the most deadly types of crashes. The most deadly crash types are roadway departure crashes, which account for 59 percent of fatal crashes; intersection crashes, which account for 21 percent; and pedestrian incidents, 11 percent of the total, where disproportionate numbers of the victims are the most vulnerable roadway users — children and youth, and the elderly. Recent data has also shown that speeding was a factor in 32 percent of all fatal crashes resulting in 13,040 lives lost1.

**Work Together to Save Lives** — The FHWA Safety program must effectively work through, and with, its customers and partners to achieve its life-saving goals—including internal offices. The FHWA advocates development of stronger and broader partnerships for roadway safety. Because the majority of fatalities occur on local roadways, working closely with safety partners at the local as well as state levels is important. Taking points for this message can range from the need for increased coordination and cooperation within the FHWA Safety Program, or among the various DOT safety offices and agencies; to the need for increasing the range and depth of the FHWA Safety Program's external partnerships; to the need for State and local highway agencies to work together, and to expand their partnerships with other stakeholders (e.g., public safety) to gain support for comprehensive highway safety improvement programs.

---

1 2007 FARS.
Talking Points

Talking points for the Key Messages are provided below. These talking points can and should be tailored to the specific occasion and audience. It is recommended that the FHWA Safety Program managers promote use of the talking points by all FHWA Safety Program staff in their presentations, on the web sites, and in marketing and outreach materials.

- For most of us, highway travel is the riskiest behavior we undertake routinely. Flying, military service, and bungee jumping are all safer than driving on American roadways. Yet as a culture, we tend to attribute the fault for a crash to the driver; we feel safer when we think crashes only happen due to driver error. Although drivers’ behavior plays a role, in reality, the design of the roadway system can contribute to the crash and to its deadly consequences. We all need to take responsibility for designing a roadway system that can avert and forgive the likely mistakes of drivers.

- If we keep doing what we’re doing, we’ll keep getting what we’re getting. Plus, if we don’t define a target, or destination; how do we chart a path forward, or know when we’ve arrived? It’s for this reason that the safety community at all levels is responding to the challenge of setting goals that are both achievable, yet stretch beyond “what we’ve always been doing.” At the state level; these goals are being established as part of the Strategic Highway Safety Planning process, which brings together stakeholders from many different elements of the highway safety community.

- Over the years, together, we have made great progress in highway safety by addressing driver behavior and by making vehicles safer. Through enforcement and education, we have increased seat belt use and reduced drunk driving. We have engineered safety into our vehicles; most notably, seat belts and air bags. All of these actions have helped us toward our goals to reduce fatalities.

- But we need to do more to reduce crashes and save lives. What else can we do? We can engineer more safety into our American roadways. Did you know that our Interstates are actually the safest roadways? That’s because they are designed with safety in mind, so despite the relatively high speeds, the road is supportive and forgiving of the driver. By engineering more safety into our arterials, our city streets and our country roads, we can save lives. Safe roads save lives.

- The Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) is a comprehensive approach to addressing safety concerns on our transportation network. The SHSP process facilitates collaborative discussions among critical safety partners across the four Es (Engineering, Enforcement, Education and Emergency Medical Systems) as well as among different levels of government. Some benefits to this process are common safety goals and priorities, strengthened partnerships, and better use of limited resources. The goals set in the SHSP address key safety needs and guide investment decisions to achieve a significant reduction in fatalities and serious injuries on public roads.

- The transportation community’s decision-making model views roadway safety as one of a series of transportation benefits to be weighed when we decide how to build and operate our highways. However, we rarely consider safety as part of a system or network. Consequently we tend to underestimate the benefits of safety programs. We need to put safety first, and take a system-wide approach to ensuring that every aspect of our roadway infrastructure system is safe for all users.

- Most fatalities occur on rural roadways. Fatality rates are higher on rural roadways. Policymakers at the Federal, State, and local levels must commit to improvement of rural
• Two-lane rural roadways are especially deadly, for many reasons. Safety engineering features are less likely to be in place; speeds are higher; and emergency medical response times are longer. We can and must do more to make our rural roadways safer.

• We all face the risks of roadway travel, and our loved ones are at risk as well. In 2007, 41,059 human beings were killed on America’s roadways, and each and every one of them had a family somewhere that suffered grief. If we work together, we can drive down the fatality numbers, but it is going to take a culture shift where we all really do put safety first.

• A major work effort in the area of safety analysis tools is the development of the Highway Safety Manual. Highway Safety Manual is a major initiative by the TRB and supported by the AASHTO and FHWA. The purpose of the Highway Safety Manual is to provide the best factual information and tools in a useful form to facilitate roadway planning, design, operations, and maintenance decisions based on explicit consideration of their safety consequences. In addition, the FHWA is managing two software programs to support the Highway Safety Manual analysis including the developments of the Interactive Highway Safety Design Model and Safety Analyst.

• Speeding is a complex problem, involving the interaction of many factors including public attitudes, road user behavior, vehicle performance, roadway design and characteristics, posted speed limits, enforcement strategies and judicial decisions. To be successful, engineering, enforcement, and education must be integrated and coordinated. No single technique can effectively accomplish the goal of reducing speeding related fatalities and injuries. By working together, we can develop and implement solutions.

• Crash prevention frees our emergency responders to address other public safety concerns. Reducing the number and severity of crashes frees law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical system (EMS) resources to attend to other types of incidents.
Branding

Adoption of an FHWA Safety Program slogan, tag line and graphic treatment will integrate the various safety products and marketing materials under a unified brand. The brand shown below will be used on all products, web sites, publications, presentations, and other marketing materials.
3. COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Planning Workbook

The Planning Workbook has been delivered as a separate document, entitled Steps to Success in Highway Safety Communications: FHWA Highway Safety Marketing, Communications & Outreach Decision Support Tool #1: Planning Workbook. The Planning Workbook is designed to enable users to:

- Plan marketing, communications and outreach activities at the project, product and program levels.
- Think through planning decisions like a marketing, communications and outreach professional.
- Access knowledge and information relevant to FHWA safety marketing, communications and outreach.

Part I of the Planning Workbook steps users through the planning process; Part II contains Information and Guidance. The Planning Workbook is not just for engineers, or researchers, or planners or management — it is intended to help safety staff from all disciplines increase their skills and knowledge regarding communications and outreach. While the Planning Workbook was designed specifically for the FHWA Safety Program, much of the content is of use to anyone planning a highway-safety-related marketing, communications and outreach activity or program. The guidance also may be useful for marketing, communications and outreach planning for other, non-safety FHWA programs.

The Planning Workbook does not replace the need for involvement of marketing, communications and outreach professionals. It is expected that, after they are trained by professionals in the use of the Planning Workbook, the FHWA Safety Program staff will be able to develop project-level plans with minimal assistance. Preparation of program-area-level plans will still require some assistance by marketing, communications and outreach professionals, although it is anticipated that other staff will be able to develop a significant portion of these plans on their own, and it will be easier for professionals to work efficiently with the FHWA Safety Program staff after they have become familiar with the process, concepts and terms that the Planning Workbook presents. It is anticipated that the Program-wide plans will continue to be prepared by marketing, communications and outreach professionals under the direction of Program leadership.

Three distinct modules are presented in the Planning Workbook: (1) A step-by-step process for planning implementation of a highway safety product; (2) A step-by-step process for promoting increased support for highway safety programs; and (3) Steps for developing roadway user awareness and education programs. While the first two modules result in marketing, communications and outreach plans, the third intentionally does not. Instead, this module assumes the user is working with partner organizations or with consultants, and focuses on questions that will help focus efforts, broaden partnerships and leverage resources to achieve greater results. A checklist of Basic Elements of Marketing, Communications and Outreach Plans is provided for use when time does not permit a more comprehensive approach to Plan development.

In order to accelerate adoption of the tools and guidance in this Plan, training and orientation for the key personnel in the Office of Safety, Office of Safety R&D, Resource Center, and Division Offices will be offered. Input from each of these program elements was considered in developing the Plan. The FHWA Safety Marketing Team is available to work with each program element individually to ensure that they understand the utility of the products of the Plan, and how to adapt them for their individual concerns and environments.