

The Condition of U.S. Highway Safety

ONE DEATH IS ONE TOO MANY



The Problem Today

U.S. Highway deaths have remained relatively constant

43,005 (2002)

42,643 (2003)

42,636 (2004)

43,443 (2005)



Jack Trice Stadium – Ames, IA

- ▶ 2005 is the highest level since 1990
- ▶ The fatality rate is still high:
1.47 deaths per 100 million VMT in 2005

Global Safety Comparisons

Fatality Rate (2002 Data) – Deaths/1B kmVT

– United Kingdom	7.6
– Sweden	8.3
– Norway	8.3
– Switzerland	8.4
– Finland	8.5
– Australia	9.0
– Denmark	9.2
– Canada	9.3
– USA	9.4
– Germany	11.1

10th



(Source: IRTAD 2004)

Why Success in Other Industrialized Nations ?

“Safety Culture”

United Kingdom

- ▶ Typical speeding, safety belt or cell phone traffic violation fine £ 1,000 = \$1,893.00
- ▶ Automated speed enforcement is commonly employed

Sweden

- ▶ “Vision Zero” National Goal is NO highway deaths
- ▶ The lowest legal BAC level is (.02)

Why Success in Other Industrialized Nations ?

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Norway

- ▶ In 2003, Norway increased traffic fines up to 30%.
- ▶ Driving under the influence is not tolerated and carries mandatory jail time.

Denmark:

- ▶ On the spot fines are issued for the infringement of all traffic regulations.

Finland

“When it comes to crime, the wealthy should suffer as much as the poor.”

Traffic fines generally are based on two factors:

- ▶ the severity of the offense
- ▶ the driver's income.

“Jaako Ryttsola, a 27-year-old Finnish Internet entrepreneur and newspaper columnist, was cruising in his BMW one recent evening.

The officer pulled over Mr. Ryttsola's car and issued him a speeding ticket for driving 43 miles an hour in a 25-mile-an-hour zone.

The fine: \$71,400.”



Australia - Most like the US

Government, Road Systems and Travel Patterns

- ▶ From nearly identical rates in 1980, the Australian rate has fallen to a point where it is now a little more than half the U.S. rate. (Based on public health measures of deaths/population)
- ▶ Implementing the “Halving Fatalities” goal introduced several traffic safety legislative and regulatory amendments to increase police powers, sharpen laws, and increase penalties.

Road traffic deaths in the 15 years since 1989.

	Australia	New South Wales	Victoria
Annual Average 1988 and 1989	2,844	999	739
Annual Average 2003 and 2004	-1,610	531	337
% Change	-43%	-47%	-54%

SOURCE: DATA EXTRACTED FROM WEB SITE OF AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT SAFETY BUREAU

HALVING Roadway Fatalities
*A Case Study from Victoria, Australia
 1989-2004*

Australia's Safety Culture

Based on Every Driver's Responsibility:

Impairment

- ▶ .05 blood alcohol for all drivers
- ▶ Zero blood alcohol first 3 years after licensing and for taxi drivers
- ▶ Immediate license loss for all drunk-driver second offenses or more

HALVING Roadway Fatalities
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Australia's Safety Culture

Based on Every Driver's Responsibility:

Enforcement

- ▶ Increased random breath testing.
Efforts increased 5-fold resulting in 1 in 3 drivers likely (statistically) to be tested annually
- ▶ Introduced automated speed limit enforcement with cameras

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Australia's Safety Culture

Based on Every Driver's Responsibility:

Vulnerable Road users

- ▶ Mandatory bicycle helmet use law (Motorcycle law since 1960's)

Education

- ▶ Long-term program of public education to support specific safety initiatives and keep traffic safety in the public arena.

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Australia's Success Factors

- ▶ A Sound and Realistic Plan
- ▶ Political and Bureaucratic Leadership
- ▶ Integrated Implementation
- ▶ Other Enabling Factors
 - Past success
 - Strong relationships
 - Sound data for evidence-based decisions
 - Public education
 - Supportive media

= Results:

A Safety Culture Change

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Change the Safety Culture

“I would conclude that one of the failures in the United States is to get highway safety as a high priority for key decision makers.”

-Brian O’Neill , President and CEO
Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

