

Look inside this “toolbox” for proven highway safety strategies

THE IOWA SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (Iowa SMS) has recently completed a *Toolbox of Highway Safety Strategies*, available at www.IowaSMS.org. The toolbox is a compilation of problem explanations and potential solutions from many different disciplines with an interest in highway safety, all supported by comprehensive data.

The purpose of the toolbox is to assist and inspire Iowa’s highway safety professionals, policy makers, and citizens in implementing ways to improve highway safety, thereby reducing death, injury, and economic loss on Iowa’s roadway system.

What is Iowa SMS?

Iowa SMS is a multidisciplinary, multi-jurisdictional group of leaders committed to reducing the human suffering and economic losses that result from crashes on Iowa’s roadways.

The four E’s of highway safety—engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency response—are represented in Iowa SMS’s membership. Highway safety practitioners from the Iowa Departments of Public Safety and Transportation, in collaboration with individuals from many other public and private organizations, lead Iowa SMS efforts.

Developing the toolbox

An earlier incarnation of the toolbox, the *Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Draft Plan*, was modeled on AASHTO’s comprehensive plan to reduce vehicle-related fatalities and injuries on the nation’s highways.

Iowa SMS invited feedback on the Iowa draft plan in 1999. The ideas and concerns of the policy makers and general public who responded were incorporated into the current toolbox. Iowa SMS also utilized a public opinion survey (see sidebar on this page) and the multidisciplinary expertise of its members in the process of compiling the toolbox.

Focusing safety efforts

The Iowa SMS toolbox offers potential solutions to a wide range of highway safety problems in Iowa, grouped into five primary areas: (1) drivers, (2) other users, (3) highways, (4) emergency response, and (5) planning and management.

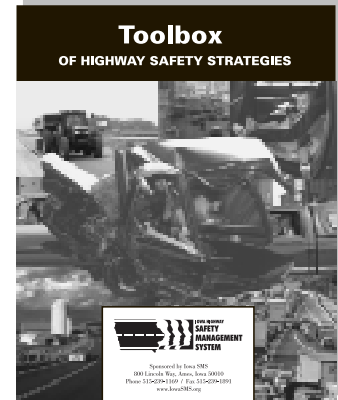
The “Drivers” section contains chapters on driver education, safety belt and child restraint usage, high-risk driving behaviors, driver licensing, and impaired driving. Young driver issues and older driver issues are emphasized. (See the figure of driver fatality rates by age, page 6.)

The “Other Users” section contains chapters on pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, school bus travel, public transit travel, motorcycle safety and awareness, large truck travel, and farm vehicle crashes.

The “Highways” section contains chapters on intersection safety, the consequences of leaving the road, head-on and across-median crashes, work zone safety, train-vehicle crashes, vehicle-animal crashes, and road safety audits. (See the chart of crash fatality causes, page 6.)

A section on “Emergency Response” discusses issues related to Iowa’s fire, rescue, and emergency medical services and needs.

SMS TOOLBOX . . . continued on page 6



Iowans’ opinions on highway safety goals and strategies

In 2000, Iowa SMS (see related article on this page) commissioned a public opinion survey of Iowans to help gauge the level of public support for a number of potential traffic safety strategies.

The results show that public opinion is in general agreement with the highway safety goals and strategies originally identified in the *Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Draft Plan* and now published in the Iowa SMS *Toolbox of Highway Safety Strategies* (see accompanying article).

The majority of the survey respondents reported moderate or high emphasis should be placed on each of the main goals identified by Iowa SMS in the next five years. There was also considerable support for implementing the specific strategies aimed at achieving these goals. In fact, nearly all of the proposed strategies received support by the majority of those surveyed.

The survey was conducted by the Center for Social and Behavioral Research at the University of Northern Iowa. Findings are included in the Iowa SMS toolbox.

The “Planning and Management” section includes chapters on information and decision support systems, intelligent transportation systems, safety management systems, and multidisciplinary safety teams.

Tools for action

The Iowa SMS toolbox identifies actions that could be considered for implementation over the next

10–20 years, as well as some specific implementation steps that could be completed sooner. The types of strategies presented in the toolbox include the following:

- law, policy, and enforcement changes
- education and public awareness to impact driver behavior
- roadway design changes

systemwide or in high-crash-incident locations/segments

- technology applied to assist drivers or enhance roadways
- emergency and medical service availability and delivery
- data collection and analysis
- planning and management

The Iowa SMS toolbox challenges Iowa’s extended

highway safety community to continue current effective programs, extend successful local initiatives statewide, and implement promising new initiatives. The document also encourages highway safety practitioners and advocates to develop partnerships among state and local governments, community groups, and the media to achieve a safer transportation system.

For more information

For more information about Iowa SMS or the toolbox, contact Mary Stahlhut, Iowa SMS coordinator, 515-239-1169, mary.stahlhut@dot.state.ia.us.

A summary of the toolbox, *Highway Safety Strategies for Iowa*, is available from Iowa SMS or at its website, www.IowaSMS.org. •

“ Change is the only constant” — —

JUST AS MANY of us are becoming somewhat familiar with the new millennium edition of the MUTCD, the FHWA has released an extensive list of proposed revisions for comment. Most of the suggested revisions are not significant; they simply correct minor errors, improve clarity, and add consistency.

But some proposed revisions, if implemented, could have impacts on state and local agency budgets.

The Notice of Proposed Amendments for MUTCD Revision 2 was posted May 21, 2002, on the Federal Register under Docket No. FHWA-2001-11159. We suggest that Iowa agencies review Revision No. 2 closely and, if appropriate, comment on the proposed changes and additions.

The notice and suggested revisions can be found on the FHWA’s MUTCD website, <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>. Comments are due on or before August 19, 2002, and can be submitted electronically through the same website.

To help you navigate the 297 pages of Revision No. 2, the following article highlights several suggested revisions that could affect your agency. The list is not complete but will help you get a good start on your review.

Highlights of proposed revisions to the MUTCD

Introduction

The Introduction will include an *expanded* list of special compliance dates.

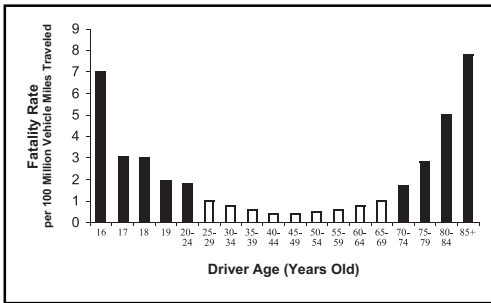
Part 1, General Provisions

- Section 1A.12 adds a new color (coral).
- Section 1A.13 includes several new definitions.

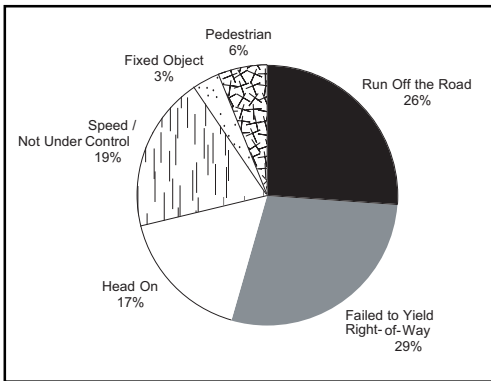
Part 2, Signs

Over 365 suggested revisions are listed for Part 2.

- Tables listing sign sizes are revised and expanded.
- Several new warning signs are added.
- Table 2C-4, Guidelines for Advance Placement of Warning Signs, is revised and expanded to comply with the 2001 AASHTO geometric design handbook.



National driver fatality rates by age form a classic “bathtub graph,” with the highest fatality rates experienced by the youngest and oldest drivers. 1996 data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



Data from the Iowa DOT Office of Traffic and Safety, such as this chart of the causes of Iowa crash fatalities (2000 crash data), can be helpful when considering potential highway safety strategies.