

**NHTSA VEHICLE SAFETY RULEMAKING and
SUPPORTING RESEARCH PRIORITIES**
January 2005 Update
Summary

Motor vehicle crashes killed more than 42,000 individuals and injured 2.9 million others in six million crashes in 2003. In addition to the terrible personal toll, these crashes make a huge economic impact on our society with an estimated annual cost of \$230.6 billion, or an average of \$820 for every person living in the United States. One of the most important ways in which the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) carries out its safety mandate is to issue and enforce Federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS). Through these rules, NHTSA strives to reduce the number of crashes and to minimize the consequences of those crashes that do occur.

The January 2005 Update describes progress on, and presents revisions to the first plan, *NHTSA Vehicle Safety Rulemaking Priorities, 2003-2006*, published in July 2003. NHTSA placed the plan on its web site on July 21, 2003, and introduced it in a Federal Register notice on July 25, 2003. Attached to this document, the updated version of the plan describes the agency's vehicle safety rulemaking priorities and supporting research 2005-2009.

The plan serves as an internal management tool as well as a means to communicate to the public our highest priorities to meet the Nation's vehicle safety challenges. The plan includes those rulemaking actions of highest priority for the period 2005 to 2009, based primarily on the greatest potential to save lives and prevent injuries. In addition, in this update as with all plans, NHTSA considered the realistic likelihood for successful action. The timing and substance of the rulemaking actions in the plan are realistic within the confines of budget and people resources. The priorities were defined through extensive discussions within the agency, taking into account the views heard in recent years at public meetings and in public comments to Federal Register notices on specific rulemaking actions and issues.

While the plan includes other active areas, in addition to the rulemaking priorities, it discusses only a portion of all rulemaking actions the agency has begun or plans to undertake in the 5-year period. It does not include every regulatory project during the upcoming years. Appendix A of the plan discusses several rulemaking and research areas of note that are either beyond the time frame covered by the plan or which, while important, are not directly related to those measures best suited to achieve the agency's goals. The absence of a particular regulatory or research activity from the plan does not mean that the agency will not pursue it. For example, rulemaking activities that NHTSA will pursue but are not listed in this plan include improved rear impact occupant protection, passenger-side mirror systems, and theft protection. Among the research projects not reflected in the plan are those that relate to rulemaking projects that are not among the highest priorities or are longer-term projects not tied to any near-term rulemakings. Some examples include projects on intersection collision avoidance and

other advanced crash avoidance systems, and large truck conspicuity and lighting. Many of the potential regulatory projects described in the plan will require additional research before any rulemaking action can be taken, but are priorities based on their potential for significantly sizeable death and injury reduction benefits. Some of these are currently being investigated under the Intelligent Vehicle Initiative (IVI). These projects are noted with milestones indicating when NHTSA plans to decide whether and how to proceed.

The plan reflects three of NHTSA's priority emphasis areas: rollover mitigation, vehicle compatibility and improved data. In this January 2005 plan update, priority areas and targeted actions are:

(Note: **Bold** text indicates activities that relate to issues that the Senate Appropriations Committee specifically mentioned in its report.)

Compatibility

- Self Protection (Research and rulemaking action for a final rule for upgraded **side impact protection** 2006)
- Partner Protection (Research and rulemaking decisions to address vehicle "aggressivity" toward other vehicles 2005-2008)

Rollover Mitigation

- Prevent Rollovers (Research and a rulemaking decision on electronic stability control 2005)
- **Reduce Occupant Ejections** (Research and rulemaking decisions on rollover sensors and side window containment 2005-2007)
- Protect Non-Ejected Occupants (A proposal for **improved roof strength** 2005; Research and rulemaking decision on improved occupant restraint during rollovers 2005-2006)

Prevent Crashes

- Improve and Enhance Indirect Visibility (Completion of a Global Technical Regulation, and research and rulemaking on aspheric mirrors and indirect vision 2006-2007)
- Reduce Light Vehicle Tire Failures (Final rule on Tire Pressure Monitoring Systems (TPMS), research and rulemaking on tire aging, bead unseating and tire strength, and decision on next steps for tire performance rulemaking 2005-2009)
- Reduce Crashes Associated with Driver Distraction (Research followed by a rulemaking decision 2005-2006)

Make Large Trucks Safer

- Shorten Stopping Distances and Improve Braking (Research and rulemaking on truck tractor braking, Electronically Controlled Braking System test development, Antilock Braking System (ABS) testing and rulemaking, and research and rulemaking decision on straight truck braking 2005-2008)
- Reduce Large Truck Tire Failures (Rulemaking to upgrade requirements for large truck tires, research and rulemaking decision on retread tires, and research and rulemaking decision on large truck TPMS and central inflation systems 2005-2009)

Hydrogen, Fuel Cell, and Alternative-Fueled Vehicles

- Component, system and full vehicle testing and rulemaking decision on hydrogen fuel systems 2005-2009

Child Protection in Light Vehicles

- Rulemaking for larger child crash dummies, research and development of 3-year-old crash test dummies, and evaluation and decision on improved child side impact protection 2005-2008

Crash Avoidance and Crashworthiness Data

- Next rulemaking action on electronic data recorders, analysis of naturalistic crash data and development and analysis of a national survey of crash data to support crash avoidance rulemaking 2005-2009

Vehicle Safety Consumer Information: Revise Frontal and Side Crash Test Programs

- Evaluation of comments and decision on changes to the frontal New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) and request for comments and agency decision on next steps for changes to side NCAP 2005-2007

Other areas included in the document though not of the highest priority are:

- Additional Crash Avoidance Activities
 - Reduce Glare from Headlamps and Auxiliary Lamps
 - Improve Light Vehicle Braking
 - Roadway Departure Warning Systems
 - Rear End Collision Avoidance Systems
 - Drowsy Driver Research
- Crashworthiness Activities
 - **Advanced Dummies, Injury Criteria and Performance Levels**
 - **Improve Protection in Frontal Crashes**
 - **Automatic Advanced Passive Technologies/Pre-Crash Sensing**
 - **Safety Belt Use Reminders**
- Other Vehicles
 - Motorcycles and Motorcycle Helmets
 - Improve School Bus Safety
 - Improve Motorcoach Safety

- Other Populations
 - Older Drivers and Occupants
 - Pedestrians
 - People with Disabilities
- Additional Consumer Information Activities
 - Consumer Information on Child Restraints

Aggressive Driving (Driver Aggressivity in the Senate report): NHTSA's planned activities to reduce aggressive driving were not included in the plan because they involve the behavioral side of the agency's ongoing activities to address traffic safety, whereas the plan focuses on vehicle related rulemaking and research. Planned actions (2005-2006) to address driver aggressivity include evaluation of the effectiveness of an anger management program on recidivism rates for aggressive drivers and evaluation of a long-term aggressive driving enforcement and public information and education program. Additional information about NHTSA research to address aggressive driving can be found at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research.

The plan also includes a discussion of the agency's New Car Assessment Program. Providing objective consumer information facilitates a market demand for safety technologies and better crash performance. Market demand developed through educated consumers armed with objective information is an important complement to the mandatory requirements imposed through the Federal motor vehicle safety standards. NHTSA has recently launched a new website – www.safercar.gov – to give consumers the information they need and will be adding to these efforts in the future.

Attachment:

NHTSA Vehicle Safety Rulemaking and Supporting Research Priorities, 2005-2009