

other factors. The program will attempt to use existing definitions, but will necessarily have to create some new definitions. The definitions are intended to be stated in terms of performance wherever possible, since it is only in terms of mutually compatible definitions of performance that the different elements of a traffic system can be assembled and seen as an operational system. Definitions based on design or construction always require an intermediate step of interpretation before they can be used to relate one part of the traffic system to another ... "1/

Our study shows that new standards of uncertain compatibility are being developed continually. There is a danger that as more incompatible standards become installed, compatibility will become increasingly more difficult to achieve. The task of developing this compatibility, while basically a technical problem, is also a problem in communication and authority.

It is also apparent as a practical consideration that some period of time will be required to develop coordination of standards and to develop organized communication between the numerous independent standards-setting organizations. A technique for dealing with this problem is needed during the interim. Our special study shows that it is possible to create interim transitional definitions based upon existing technical knowledge which will enable the linking of a number of existing standards in a compatible way by defining their relationship. Such interim transitional definitions could be accomplished through a coordination effort within FHWA. Other standardizing agencies could be consulted.

In light of the need for compatible standards, the Safety Board makes the following recommendations:

1. That the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration work with a view to having all new standards for drivers, vehicles, and highways developed or prescribed or approved by the Bureau of Public Roads, the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety, and the National Highway Safety Bureau compatible in all aspects and that existing standards are brought into operational compatibility as soon as possible. Such compatibility should be described in terms of operational performance of drivers, vehicles, and highways in the highway system and make more apparent the interrelated effects determined by the standards.

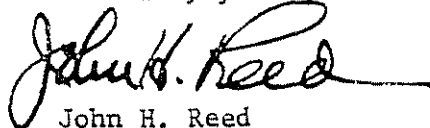
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1/ Feasibility Study, New York Safety Car Program, Final Report, State of New York, Department of Motor Vehicles, 8/31/66, p. 1 - 8.

2. That the Federal Highway Administration assert leadership among such standardizing or standards-influencing organizations as the American Association of State Highway Officials, Institute of Traffic Engineers, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances, National Association of County Officials, American Municipal Association, Society of Automotive Engineers, American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, Vehicle Equipment Safety Commission, American Medical Association, National Safety Council, and others to take the necessary steps so that standards for drivers, vehicles, and highways originating within these organizations will be technically compatible. This effort should include a detailed review of the communication and field of responsibility factors which may determine the technical framework of standards. The review should recommend steps by the Federal Highway Administration that may be necessary to insure compatibility of future standards.
  
3. That, as an intermediate step, until the time when compatibility of standards is obtained, FHWA develop technical definitions of an interim transitional nature to bridge the gaps of incompatibility among existing standards used by the various Bureaus of FHWA. Such interim transitional definitions may be employed to assist the understanding of the relationships between rules, regulations, specifications, and other documents as needed to insure the coordinated safe operation of the driver-vehicle-highway system.

The Safety Board will be pleased to consult with personnel of the Federal Highway Administration concerning these recommendations.

Sincerely yours,



John H. Reed  
Chairman

Enclosure