

# Uniform Guidelines *for* State Highway Safety Programs



November 2006

## Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 15

# Traffic Enforcement Services

Each State, in cooperation with its political subdivisions, tribal governments, and other parties as appropriate, should develop and implement a comprehensive highway safety program, reflective of State demographics, to achieve a significant reduction in traffic crashes, fatalities, and injuries on public roads. The highway safety program should include a traffic enforcement services program designed to enforce traffic laws and regulations; reduce traffic-crashes and resulting fatalities and injuries; provide aid and comfort to the injured; investigate and report specific details and causes of traffic crashes; supervise traffic crash and highway incident clean-up; and maintain safe and orderly movement of traffic along the highway system. This guideline describes the components that a State traffic enforcement services program should include and the minimum criteria that the program components should meet.

## I. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

### A. Planning and Coordination

Each State should have centralized program planning, implementation, and coordination to achieve and sustain effective traffic enforcement services. The State Highway Safety Office (SHSO) should provide the leadership, training and technical assistance necessary to:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive highway safety plan for all traffic enforcement service programs, in cooperation with law enforcement (i.e., State, county, local or tribal law enforcement agency leaders);
- Generate broad-based support for traffic enforcement programs;
- Coordinate traffic enforcement services with other traffic safety program areas including commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety activities such as the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program; and
- Integrate traffic enforcement services into traffic safety and other injury prevention programs.

### B. Program Elements

State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, in conjunction with the SHSO, should establish traffic safety services as a priority within their comprehensive enforcement programs. A law enforcement program should be built on a foundation of commitment, cooperation, planning, monitoring, and evaluation within the agency's enforcement program. State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies should:

- Provide the public with effective and efficient traffic enforcement services through enabling legislation and regulations;
- Coordinate activities with State Departments of Transportation to ensure both support and accurate data collection;
- Develop and implement a comprehensive traffic enforcement services program that is focused on general deterrence and inclusive of impaired driving (i.e., alcohol or other drugs), seat belt use and child passenger safety laws, motorcycles, speeding, and other programs to reduce hazardous driving behaviors;
- Develop cooperative working relationships with other governmental agencies, community organizations, and traffic safety stakeholders on traffic safety and enforcement issues;
- Maintain traffic enforcement strategies and policies for all area of traffic safety including roadside sobriety checkpoints, seat belt use, pursuit driving, crash investigating and reporting, speed enforcement, and hazardous moving traffic violations; and
- Establish performance measures for traffic enforcement services that are both qualitative and quantitative.
- Traffic enforcement services should look beyond the issuance of traffic citations to include enforcement of criminal laws and that address drivers of all types of vehicles, including trucks and motorcycles.

## **II. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

The SHSO should encourage law enforcement agencies to develop and maintain a comprehensive resource management plan that identifies and deploys resources necessary to effectively support traffic enforcement services. The resource management plan should include a specific component on traffic enforcement services and safety, integrating traffic enforcement services and safety initiatives into a comprehensive agency enforcement program. Law enforcement agencies should:

- Periodically conduct assessments of traffic enforcement service demands and resources to meet identified needs;
- Develop a comprehensive resource management plan that includes a specific traffic enforcement services and safety component;
- Define the management plan in terms of budget requirements and services to be provided; and
- Develop and implement operational strategies and policies that identify the deployment of traffic enforcement services resources to address program demands and agency goals.

## **III. TRAINING**

Training is essential to support traffic enforcement services and to prepare law enforcement officers to effectively perform their duties. Training accomplishes a wide variety of necessary goals and can be obtained through a variety of sources. Law enforcement agencies should periodically assess enforcement activities to determine training needs and to ensure training is endorsed by the State's Police Officers Standards and Training agency. Effective training should:

- Provide officers the knowledge and skills to act decisively and correctly;
- Increase compliance with agency enforcement goals;
- Assist in meeting priorities;
- Improve compliance with established policies;
- Result in greater productivity and effectiveness;
- Foster cooperation and unity of purpose;
- Help offset liability actions and prevent inappropriate conduct by law enforcement officers;
- Motivate and enhance officer professionalism; and
- Require traffic enforcement knowledge and skills for all recruits.

Law enforcement agencies should:

- Provide traffic enforcement in-service training to experienced officers;
- Provide specialized CMV in-service training to traffic enforcement officers as appropriate;
- Conduct training to implement specialized traffic enforcement skills, techniques, or programs; and
- Train instructors using certified training in order to increase agency capabilities and to ensure continuity of specialized enforcement skills and techniques.

#### **IV. TRAFFIC LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Providing traffic enforcement services and the enforcement of traffic laws and ordinances is a responsibility shared by all law enforcement agencies. Among the primary objectives of this function is encouraging motorists and pedestrians to comply voluntarily with the laws and ordinances. Administrators should apply their enforcement resources in a manner that ensures the greatest impact on traffic safety. Traffic enforcement services should:

- Include accurate problem identification and countermeasure design;
- Apply at appropriate times and locations, coupled with paid media and communication efforts designed to make the motoring public aware of the traffic safety problem and planned enforcement activities; and
- Include a system to document and report results.

#### **V. COMMUNICATION PROGRAM**

States should develop and implement communication strategies directed at supporting policy and program elements. Public awareness and knowledge about traffic enforcement services are essential for sustaining increased compliance with traffic laws and regulations. Communications should highlight and support specific program activities underway in the community and communication programs and materials should be culturally relevant, appropriate to the audience and multilingual as necessary. This requires a well-organized, effectively managed social marketing campaign that addresses specific high-risk populations. The SHSO, in cooperation with law enforcement agencies, should develop a statewide communications plan and campaign that:

- Identifies and addresses specific audiences at particular risk;
- Addresses enforcement of seat belt use, child passenger safety, impaired driving, speed, and other serious traffic laws;
- Capitalizes on special events and awareness campaigns;
- Identifies and supports the efforts of traffic safety activist groups, community coalitions, and the health and medical community to gain increased support of, and attention to, traffic safety and enforcement;
- Uses national themes, events, and material;
- Motivates the public to support increased enforcement of traffic laws;
- Educates and reminds the public about traffic laws and safe driving behaviors;
- Disseminates information to the public about agency activities and accomplishments;
- Enhances relationships with news media and health and medical communities;
- Provides safety education and community services;
- Provides legislative and judicial information and support;
- Increases the public's understanding of the enforcement agency's role in traffic safety;
- Markets information about internal activities to sworn and civilian members of the agency;
- Enhances the agency's safety enforcement role and increases employee understanding and support; and
- Recognizes employee achievements.

## VI. DATA AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

The SHSO, in conjunction with law enforcement agencies, should develop a comprehensive evaluation program to measure progress toward established project goals and objectives; effectively plan and implement statewide, county, local, and tribal traffic enforcement services programs; optimize the allocation of limited resources; measure the impact of traffic enforcement on reducing crime and traffic crashes, injuries, and deaths; and compare costs of criminal activity to costs of traffic crashes. Data should be collected from police accident reports, daily officer activity reports that contain workload and citation information, highway department records (e.g., traffic volume), citizen complaints, and officer observations. Law enforcement managers should:

- Include evaluation in initial program planning efforts to ensure that data will be available and that sufficient resources will be allocated;
- Report results regularly to project and program managers, law enforcement decision-makers, and members of the public and private sectors;
- Use results to guide future activities and to assist in justifying resources to governing bodies;
- Conduct a variety of surveys to assist in determining program effectiveness, such as roadside sobriety surveys, speed surveys, license checks, belt use surveys, and surveys measuring public knowledge and attitudes about traffic enforcement programs;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of services provided in support of priority traffic safety areas;
- Maintain and report traffic data to appropriate repositories, such as police accident reports, the FBI *Uniform Crime Report*, FMCSA's SAFETYNET system, and annual statewide reports; and
- Evaluate the impact of traffic enforcement services on criminal activity.

An effective records program should:

- Provide information rapidly and accurately;
- Provide routine compilations of data for management use in the decision making process;
- Provide data for operational planning and execution;
- Interface with a variety of data systems, including statewide traffic safety records systems; and
- Be accessible to enforcement, planners and management.