

The mission of the Office of Motor Carrier and Highway Safety is to develop and promote, in coordination with other Departmental modes, data-driven, analysis-based, and innovative programs to achieve continuous safety improvements in the Nation's highway system, intermodal connections, and motor carrier operations. The Office of Motor Carrier Research and Standards manages the safety regulatory program and the central research management function for Motor Carrier and Highway Safety.

There are eight major research and technology focus areas: regulatory evaluation and reform; compliance and enforcement; driver training and performance management; driver alertness and fatigue; driver physical qualifications; car-truck proximity; HAZMAT safety and cargo tank integrity; and crash causation and profiling.

*Compliance and enforcement* concentrates on studies directed toward improving carrier compliance with, and/or enforcement of, existing Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.



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# Educational and Technical Assistance to CMV Drivers and Motor Carriers

## Introduction

The Peer Exchange is a process adopted by the Office of Motor Carrier and Highway Safety (OMCHS) in which teams of professionals, representing state and federal government and private industry, identify effective commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety programs and document their findings for implementation by other jurisdictions throughout North America.

Peer exchanges bring together many different perspectives and ideas, enabling safety concerns to be addressed more effectively. Peer exchange teams also visit local sites and observe operations to find various CMV safety initiatives that are effective and practical. The most innovative and successful techniques are identified as "best practices." Information about best practices is then made available to any State that wants to consider incorporating them into its program.

The peer exchange process has proven to be an effective technique by which to share and develop ideas among States to address important safety issues. Recently, OMCHS successfully completed the third in an ongoing series of national peer exchanges. This tech brief summarizes the findings of the third peer exchange, *Educational and Technical Assistance to CMV Drivers and Motor Carriers*.

## Purpose

The educational and technical assistance (ETA) peer exchange had two main objectives: to identify best practices for providing effective educational and technical assistance to commercial drivers and motor carriers, and to disseminate information on the best practices to States and private industry.

## Methodology

The ETA peer exchange team consisted of federal, state, and private industry motor carrier safety experts; the exchange was hosted by the Utah Department of Transportation and facilitated by the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University.

The peer exchange team visited seven states—California, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Utah—from July 1997 to April 1998. In addition, several private trucking companies were visited in conjunction with some state site visits. Other trucking companies, trucking associations, and truck driving schools presented their ETA programs at peer exchange meetings held during the site visits and shared some of their experiences with the peer exchange team.

## Findings

The peer exchange team determined that the ETA program in Minnesota provides an excellent example for other States. Minnesota's program includes the basic components necessary for an effective and well-structured ETA program. **Figure 1** depicts the major components of the program and the main steps taken in its development.

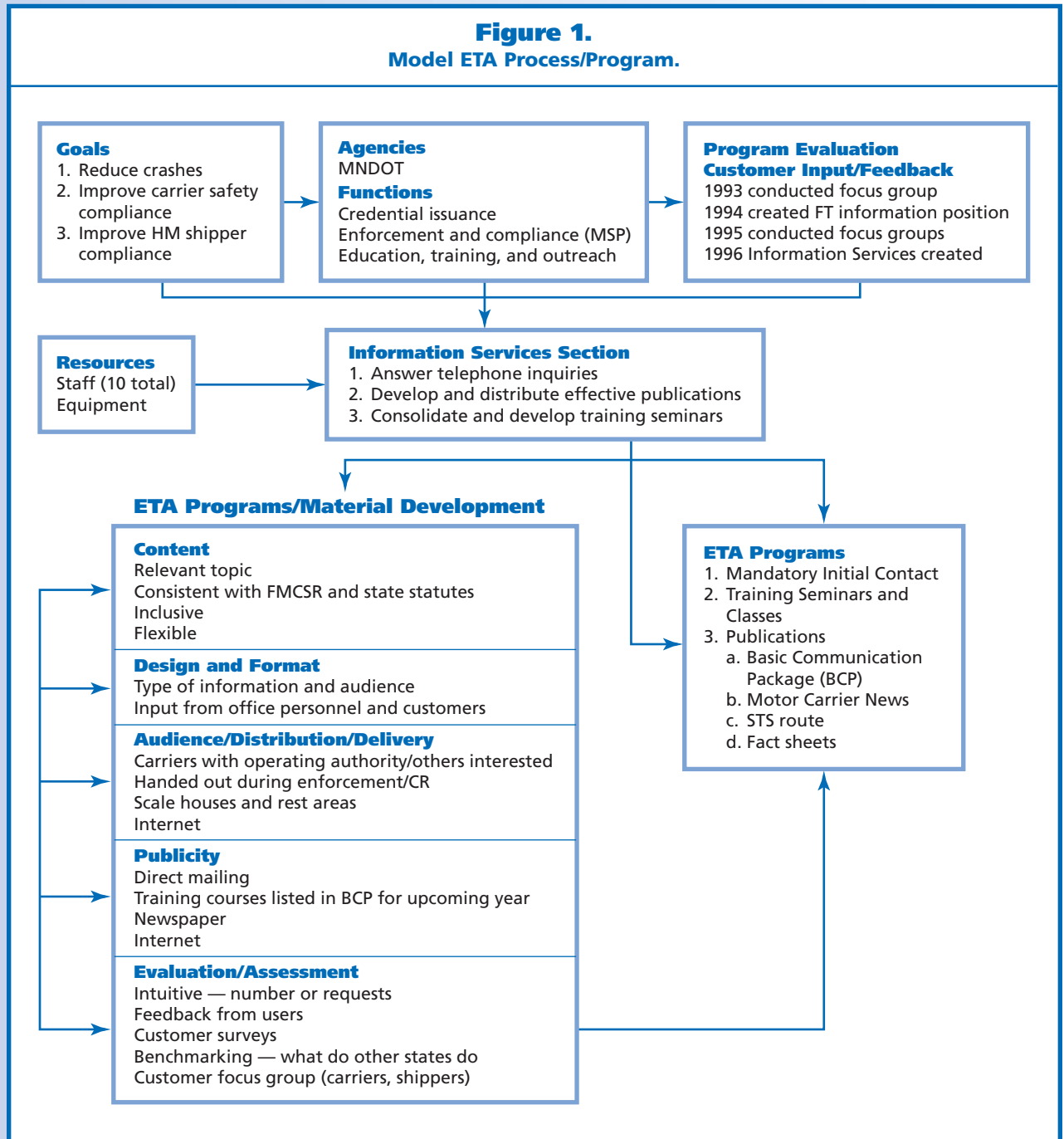
The team identified six major elements that contribute to the success of ETA programs. These factors directly or indirectly impact the effectiveness of ETA activities in improving highway safety:

- Management philosophy and attitude
- Information in-print (publications)
- Training programs
- Innovative delivery methods (technology)
- Outreach and awareness
- Partnership, coordination, and cooperation
- Private sector ETA

### Management Philosophy

The team discovered that the primary element necessary for effective ETA programs is management philosophy. An effective management philosophy results in an environment that is conducive to and supportive of educational and training efforts.

**Figure 1.**  
**Model ETA Process/Program.**



Effective management in a trucking company would balance its business needs, customers' needs, safety performance, and training. Similarly, a State would balance its enforcement and educational programs to yield the most improvement to safety.

The peer exchange team found that management philosophy has an impact on all other elements contributing to the success of ETA programs.

### Information In-Print

Almost every state visited by the peer exchange team had some type of a "trucking handbook." Generally these publications covered motor carrier safety regulations in the State. The team identified several features that distinguish effective handbooks:

- Relevant and easy-to-understand information
- Up-to-date information
- Effective design
- Effective delivery/distribution
- Use of the Internet

Other types of publications and formats found by the peer exchange team included special purpose publications, pamphlets/booklets/brochures, newsletters, and fact sheets.

- "Partnerships in Highway Safety," the Federal Highway Administration's principal publication on motor carrier ETA, provides motor carriers with a comprehensive source of information about the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. The peer exchange team found it to be a popular document in most States visited.

### Training Programs

During the peer exchange visits to state agencies and motor carriers, it was obvious that there were an extensive number of training programs available to motor carriers and commercial motor vehicle drivers. Programs included regularly scheduled classes, on-demand or by-request classes, and occasional presentations to raise the level of safety awareness.

- In Minnesota, the *Initial Motor Carrier Contact* training seminar provides an overview of relevant laws and procedures that carriers must follow to be in compliance with state laws. All new household goods and passenger carriers are required to attend this program within three months of obtaining operating authority.

Team members also noted that the private sector (larger trucking companies, trucking associations, and insurance companies) has developed extensive training programs for its drivers and members. These

programs can act as a valuable resource to federal and state agencies in their training and educational efforts.

### Innovative Delivery Opportunities

Effective delivery and user accessibility are critical to the success of ETA programs. One of the challenges for ETA programs is to reach small carriers who lack the experience or resources to access or develop their own training programs.

Advancements in information technology—most notably, the Internet—are revolutionizing information processing, delivery and access. The Internet is an effective and economical medium for reaching a wide audience with extensive information. The peer exchange team found that over 50 percent of independent truckers now use the Internet in some capacity.

Other innovative delivery methods that the team found in use were computer presentations, fax services, video conferencing, "one-stop shops," DMV service centers, and telephone help lines.

- As several States (Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, and New Mexico) consolidate and reorganize their motor carrier functions, they have created "one-stop shops" to provide an outlet for delivering ETA information in a consistent, effective, and convenient manner.

### Outreach and Awareness

The peer exchange team looked at training and outreach programs that aim at raising awareness of the general public, motor carrier industry groups, or state agency staff about a particular issue. Outreach activities encompass a wide range of programs that raise awareness and create a positive environment that is conducive to improving highway safety.

- The Truckers and Troopers program in Utah was started in 1991 as a joint effort between the trucking institute and the Utah Highway patrol, establishing a partnership between law enforcement and the trucking industry.
- The Share the Road program is a public-private partnership with a mission to reduce CMV crashes by promoting safe sharing of roads. In Pennsylvania, brochures, posters, and audio tapes were developed for truck drivers, car drivers, and carriers to promote their Share the Road-type campaign.

### Partnerships and Coordination

State trucking associations are very active in working with state agencies; in several of the States visited by

## Researcher

This was a team effort hosted by the Utah State DOT with representatives from Federal and State motor carrier agencies, CVSA, and the motor carrier industry, in collaboration with Dr. Ayman Smadi, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND. MCSAP Grant Project No. MC-96-49-333.

## Distribution

This Tech Brief is being distributed according to a standard distribution. Direct distribution is being made to the Resource Centers and Divisions.

## Availability

The study final report is available from the National Technical Information Service, Telephone: (703) 605-6000.

## Key Words

best practices, outreach, training, handbooks, pamphlets, brochures, newsletters, technology, partnership, educational and technical assistance (ETA).

## Notice

This Tech Brief is disseminated under the sponsorship of the Department of Transportation in the interest of information exchange. The Tech Brief provides a synopsis of the study's final publication. The Tech Brief does not establish policies or regulations, nor does it imply FHWA endorsement of the conclusions or recommendations. The U.S. Government assumes no liability for its contents or their use.



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the peer exchange team, trucking associations played a lead role in developing and supporting ETA programs.

States have several mechanisms for dialogue with the trucking industry. Advisory boards and councils generally work with the trucking industry on various regulatory, administrative, and safety issues.

- The Colorado Motor Carrier Advisory Council shapes and guides compliance and the regulatory process; the council consists of government and industry representatives and has a unified voice in state transportation issues.
- The Iowa DOT Motor Vehicle Division has a motor carrier Advisory Committee that meets at least twice a year to discuss current issues and proposed regulatory and legislative changes.

## Private Sector ETA

Several private sector companies and associations participated in the peer exchange activities, including trucking companies, trucking associations, shippers, and insurance companies. The participation of the private sector provided a wealth of information on their ETA activities, and more importantly, insights on their assessments of federal and state ETA programs.

## Recommendations

The best practices summarized in the final report can provide States with a good measuring tool and may fit several environments, depending on a State's level of resources and types of issues. The peer exchange team developed nine major recommendations:

- Secure management's commitment to an effective ETA program.
- Establish stakeholder coalitions such as user advisory panels and interdepartmental groups.
- Solicit feedback from all participants to ensure that programs are relevant and effective.
- Use industry associations to market programs to potential participants.
- Check for existing and available material before expending resources on developing new program material.
- Target programs to those who need them the most.
- Develop and implement user-friendly means of access to ETA information.
- Cultivate a positive and cooperative perception among stakeholders.
- Create a repository of resources and information on ETA topics and programs that can be accessed at the national level.

## Peer Exchange Final Reports

States are encouraged to use the ETA peer exchange final report to develop new ETA programs, evaluate their existing programs, and benefit from other States' experiences. The best practices identified in the report are not intended as a standard prescription to solve all motor carrier safety problems. On the contrary, they are flexible tools that can be tailored to fit the needs of an individual agency or organization. The final report, *Educational and Technical Assistance to CMV Drivers and Motor Carriers*, is available at the project's Web site, <http://www.cmv-eta.org>, and also from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS).

The final reports for the first two Peer Exchanges are also available from NTIS: *Peer Review of Out Of Service Verification*, and *Peer Exchange on Hours-of-Service Compliance*.