

# Highway Safety Strategic Plan 1999



## New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee

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George E. Pataki, Governor ❖ Richard E. Jackson, Jr., Chair

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# 1999 HIGHWAY SAFETY STRATEGIC PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

The fundamental goals of New York's comprehensive statewide highway safety program are to prevent motor vehicle crashes, save lives and reduce the severity of injuries suffered in crashes. The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee provides leadership and support for the attainment of these goals through its administration of the federal 402 program and the coordination of state and local initiatives directed toward the state's highway safety priorities.

The priorities established for Governor Pataki's 1999 highway safety program include the enactment of laws reducing the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level from .10 percent to .08 percent and increasing the penalties for aggressive driving, aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, and operating an uninsured vehicle. Other priorities focus on the prevention of crashes through increased public awareness, education, and enforcement. The Governor's priorities include the prevention of crashes at intersections, continued efforts in school vehicle safety, expanded participation in the state's Motorcycle Rider Education Program, and increased use of occupant restraints.

The 1999 Highway Safety Strategic Plan outlines the major highway safety problems that have been identified and presents short-term and long-term performance goals for improvements in these areas. In addition to comprehensive statewide goals, specific goals and objectives for each major program area have been established. These goals and objectives represent targets for improvement that will contribute to the attainment of New York's fundamental goals of saving lives and mitigating the severity of injuries suffered on the state's roadways. Brief descriptions of the current status and the goals and objectives established for the statewide highway safety program and for the major program areas follow.

# STATEWIDE HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAM

The primary measures used to assess the current status of the state's highway safety program include the number of fatalities, the fatal crash rate per one million vehicle miles traveled (VMT), the injury rate per 100,000 population, and the Mean Severity of Injury (MSI). The MSI is the average severity of motor vehicle injuries based on the injury severity scale used in the Department of Motor Vehicles' (DMV) crash file. The MSI ranges from 1 to 4; the lower the score, the lower the average severity.

NEW YORK STATE CRASH, FATALITY, AND INJURY MEASURES, 1993-1996						
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1999 Goal	2003 Goal
Fatalities	1,774	1,669	1,670	1,590	1,560	1,475
Fatal Crash Rate/ 100 million VMT	1.45	1.35	1.35	1.23	1.20	1.18
Mean Severity of Injury (MSI)	1.357	1.332	1.331	1.312	1.246	1.181

In 1996, a total of 1,590 people died as a result of motor vehicle crashes in New York State, a decrease of 80 fatalities from the previous year. There were also improvements in other statewide measures. The fatal crash rate per 100 million VMT decreased from 1.35 in 1994 and 1995 to 1.23 in 1996. In addition, the severity of injuries, as measured by the MSI, declined.

## GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The overall goals of New York's highway safety program are to continue the downward trends in the number of fatalities, the fatal crash rate, and the severity of the injuries suffered. A comprehensive approach will be undertaken with strategies implemented in all of the major highway safety program areas. The effectiveness of the collective efforts will be assessed through changes in the fatality and injury measures that have been identified.

# IMPAIRED DRIVING

Alcohol, drugs, and highway safety continues to be one of New York's most successful program areas. New York's continued success in the area of impaired driving is the result of a comprehensive approach that includes the activities of public interest groups, programs sponsored by companies and organizations in the private sector, and programs at the state and local levels, especially the Special Traffic Options Program for Driving While Intoxicated (STOP-DWI). In 1997, approximately \$20 million was available for programming at the local level through STOP-DWI.

ALCOHOL-RELATED CRASHES IN NEW YORK STATE*, 1993-1996						
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1999 Goal	2003 Goal
Alcohol-Related Fatalities	484	405	448	361	300	250
Alcohol-Related Injuries	12,076	11,107	10,933	10,467	10,400	9,850
Drivers Under 21 Involved in Alcohol-Related Fatal Crashes	59	55	60	48	46	40

\* Police-reported crashes

New York's continued progress in addressing the problem of impaired driving is evidenced by steady downward trends in the numbers of alcohol-related crashes, fatalities, and injuries over the four-year period 1993-1996. The number of alcohol-related fatal crashes declined by 26 percent, and the number of alcohol-related injury crashes decreased by 13 percent. Despite these downward trends, alcohol-related fatal crashes represented more than one-fifth of all fatal crashes in 1996. Drivers under 21 years of age (below the legal drinking age) and drivers ages 21-34 continue to be overrepresented in alcohol-related fatal crashes and arrests.

Male drivers consistently receive 84% of the tickets issued for impaired driving, and 50% of the drivers arrested for impaired driving continue to have a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level well above the legal limit.

The percentage of drivers arrested for impaired driving who are eligible to enroll in the state's Drinking Driver Program (DDP) has remained fairly constant at 81% over the four-year period, 1993-1996. Of those eligible to participate in the DDP, the proportion who enrolled increased from 43% in 1993 to 46% in 1996.

Legislative initiatives have also played a key role in reducing the incidence of impaired driving. Promoted by Governor Pataki, the zero tolerance law, effective November 1, 1996, makes it illegal for drivers under age 21 to drive with a BAC level of .02 percent or higher. Two additional measures recently signed into law by Governor Pataki are license sanctions and other penalties for persons under age 21 who use fraudulent identification to purchase alcohol and a law prohibiting the possession of an open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle. Legislation proposed by the Governor provides for better detection of altered licenses by using license document encoding and bar code readers. Governor Pataki has signed legislation that expands the use of ignition interlocks for a larger group of alcohol impaired drivers. The Pataki Administration also supports a law to reduce the legal BAC limit from .10 percent to .08 percent.

## GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The primary goals of the impaired driving program are to reduce the number of alcohol-related traffic fatalities and injuries, and the number of drivers under 21 years old and 21-29 years of age involved in alcohol-related fatal crashes. This will be accomplished through toughening penalties, increasing the proportion of eligible drivers who enroll in the DDP, conducting training and enforcement programs for police officers on underage alcohol sales enforcement, conducting training for prosecutors, raising awareness among persons 21-34 years of age, and investigating the issues related to youth and alcohol, and persistent drinking drivers. These goals and objectives will be accomplished through public information and education, increased enforcement, programs geared toward specific target groups, training programs, community-based programs, legislative and regulatory measures, and research and evaluation.

## POLICE TRAFFIC SERVICES

Enforcement of the traffic laws, along with educational endeavors, continues to be a cornerstone of the state's highway safety program. Traffic law enforcement plays an important role in deterring drunk and drugged driving, speeding, and other risky behaviors that contribute to crashes, as well as encouraging positive behavior such as seat belt use. Highly publicized selective enforcement efforts targeting impaired driving, seat belt use, and, more recently, aggressive driving have been very successful in New York.

NEW YORK STATE MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES, 1993 - 1996						
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1999 Goal	2003 Goal
Total Crashes	257,209	259,184	253,136	250,521	248,000	243,000
Rate (crashes/ 100 million VMT)	229	230	220	212	208	201

The total number of reportable motor vehicle crashes declined to 250,521 in 1996, the lowest number in four years. This was reflected in a decline in the crash rate from 220 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in 1995 to 212 crashes per 100 million VMT in 1996.

Compared to 1996, speeding and seat belt tickets issued in 1997 increased both in number and as a proportion of the total tickets issued, while the number of tickets for impaired driving increased, but continued to represent the same proportion of total tickets.

### *Speed Enforcement*

The speed of the vehicle contributes directly to the severity of the crash and the injuries and property damage that result. The increased speeds on some highways have been attributed to a "spillover" effect with drivers continuing to drive at higher speeds after leaving a roadway with a higher posted speed limit. The goal of speed enforcement is to reduce the number of crashes where speed is a contributing factor.

SPEED-RELATED CRASHES IN NEW YORK STATE, 1993 - 1996						
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1999 Goal	2003 Goal
Drivers in Crashes Where Speed Is Contributing Factor	21,616	21,517	20,537	21,067	20,350	18,900

### *Aggressive Driving*

While the unsafe driving actions now known as aggressive driving have been observed for many years, the terms "aggressive driving" and "road rage" have entered the vernacular in the past year. Increasingly, aggressive driving actions escalate into road rage, where one driver intentionally seeks to cause harm to another driver or another driver's vehicle.

In 1997 and early 1998, New York took swift action against aggressive driving. Governor Pataki proposed legislation to increase the penalties associated with aggressive driving, the DMV

produced a series of non-commercial sustaining announcements (NCSAs) for radio and TV, the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee and the University at Albany School of Public Health sponsored a symposium on aggressive driving, the Division of State Police conducted selective enforcement efforts, and a statewide telephone survey was conducted to collect information from drivers about their experiences with aggressive driving.

## GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the police traffic services program is to decrease the number of motor vehicle crashes by deterring aggressive and other risky driving actions. Both routine and selective enforcement approaches will be used to achieve the established goals. In addition, training programs will be conducted for police officers, probation officers, judges, and prosecutors; and new initiatives targeting specific enforcement issues, such as aggressive drivers, scofflaws, unlicensed drivers, and commercial vehicle operators will also be explored.

## MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

Over the four-year period, 1993-1996, motorcycle crashes decreased by 19 percent, resulting in sizeable declines in fatalities and injuries. In 1996, the number of motorcyclists killed declined by 13% and the number injured declined by 22%, compared to 1993. Contributing to these decreases are the efforts of the Motorcycle Association of New York State (MANYS) which has been working to increase public awareness and promote motorcycle safety for the past four years.

MOTORCYCLE CRASHES IN NEW YORK STATE, 1993 - 1996						
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1999 Goal	2003 Goal
Motorcycle Crashes	4,320	3,916	3,753	3,492	3,300	3,000
Motorcyclists Killed	114	87	92	99	83	75

Despite these downward trends, young operators continue to be overrepresented in motorcycle crashes. In 1996, 12% of the motorcycle operators involved in crashes were under 21 years of age, but less than 1% of the licensed operators were in this age group; 39% of operators involved in crashes were ages 21-29, but this age group represents only 10% of licensed

motorcyclists. Insufficient information is available on the exact nature of these crashes and the extent to which factors such as driver inexperience, alcohol, and speed may have contributed.

New York has recently undertaken a major initiative to address motorcycle operator inexperience and lack of training. In 1997, New York established the Motorcycle Rider Education Program to provide instruction and field training to improve the riding skills of motorcyclists in the state. The issue of unlicensed operators, including motorcyclists who operate a motorcycle with a learner's permit, year after year, without ever obtaining a license, also continues to be of concern, and the DMV is currently looking at ways to address this problem.

## GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The primary goal in the area of motorcycle safety is to further reduce the number of motorcycle crashes and fatalities. Objectives designed to accomplish this include, continued support for the expansion of rider education opportunities and examining the issues related to the characteristics of motorcycle crashes and unlicensed operators. The strategies identified to accomplish this goal include public information and education, and research and evaluation initiatives. Research and evaluation efforts will focus on identifying trends and problem areas related to the characteristics of fatal motorcycle crashes and operators and assessing the extent to which persons continue to operate motorcycles without the proper license.

# PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE, AND IN-LINE SKATING SAFETY

## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Over the four-year period, 1993-1996, the number of pedestrians killed and injured in motor vehicle crashes continued to decline. In 1996, the number of pedestrians killed dropped by 12% and the number injured dropped by 19%, compared to 1993. Despite these sizeable decreases, however, more than one-quarter of all fatal crashes continue to involve pedestrians. More than 70% of the pedestrian/motor vehicle crashes and 55% of the pedestrian fatalities occurred in New York City. One-third of the pedestrians killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes are under 20 years of age, with children ages 10-14 comprising 11% of the total.

<b>PEDESTRIANS KILLED AND INJURED IN NEW YORK STATE, 1993 - 1996</b>						
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1999 Goal	2003 Goal
Pedestrians Killed	449	408	428	397	385	360
In New York City	264	223	236	213	205	190
Pedestrians Injured	21,083	20,671	20,214	19,462	18,750	17,700

Although a large amount of information is available on crashes involving pedestrians, data with regard to whether the pedestrian injured or killed was alcohol-impaired is limited. Data on the type and severity of injury by age and gender of the pedestrian is also very limited. These limitations affect the ability of the highway safety community to determine the nature and scope of the pedestrian safety problem. Issues related to the collection and reporting of data and the linking of data files need to be addressed in order for such information to be more readily available.

## BICYCLE SAFETY

The number of bicyclists killed and injured in motor vehicle crashes continues to fluctuate from year to year. Over the four-year period 1993-1996, the number of bicyclists killed ranged from 42 to 51, while the number of bicyclists injured ranged from 8,491 to 9,290.

<b>BICYCLE/MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES IN NEW YORK STATE, 1993-1996</b>						
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1999 Goal	2003 Goal
Bicyclists Killed	42	47	51	44	40	35
In New York City	14	15	20	16	14	11
Bicyclists Injured	9,027	8,491	9,290	9,074	8,200	7,600

Bicycle/motor vehicle fatal and personal injury crashes represented approximately 3% of all fatal crashes and 5% of all personal injury crashes in each of the four years, 1993-1996. More than half (56%) of the bicycle/motor vehicle crashes and 35% of the bicycle fatalities occurred in New York City. In 1996, 48% of the bicyclists killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes were under 20 years of age; 42% were bicyclists ages 20-44.

The underreporting of bicycle crashes and the lack of available data on the type and severity of injuries by age and gender limit the ability to accurately determine the scope and characteristics of the bicycle safety problem in New York. Other factors contributing to a limited understanding of the problem include a lack of data pertaining to the use of bicycle helmets in general and in crashes.

A number of steps have been taken to reduce the number and severity of bicycle accidents. The DMV is also educating bicyclists on ways to prevent bicycle accidents and increase safety.

## IN-LINE SKATING SAFETY

In-line skating is becoming an increasingly popular mode of transportation, as well as a recreational activity. This is especially true in the New York City area where some messenger services are replacing the use of bicycles with in-line skates. New York implemented a law, effective January 1, 1996, that requires children under age 14 to wear a helmet when skating.

Beginning July 1, 1996, New York's police accident report was changed to include information on in-line skating accidents, including the safety equipment used. Once complete data become available, the nature and scope of crashes that involve in-line skaters will be evaluated. The New York State Department of Health (DOH) has also recently begun collecting data relating to in-line skating. In 1995, the only year for which DOH data are currently available, there were nine skating deaths in New York State. All nine deaths were the result of a collision between a skater and a car, truck, bus, or bicycle. Of the six who suffered fatal traumatic brain injuries, five were not wearing helmets.

### GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The primary goals of the pedestrian, bicycle and in-line skating safety programs are to reduce the number of pedestrians, bicyclists, and skaters killed and injured. These goals will be accomplished by providing pedestrian, bicycle, and in-line skating safety education to both the general public and specific target groups, and developing and evaluating engineering solutions to these safety problems. Objectives will also include determining 1) the nature and scope of the pedestrian crash problem, especially with respect to the location of crashes and, in crashes involving alcohol or drugs, whether the driver or the pedestrian was impaired; and 2) the prevalence and circumstances of crashes involving in-line skaters. The strategies identified to accomplish the goals include public information and education, and networking and program development at the local level. Also included will be research and evaluation activities to assess program effectiveness and assist in defining future program direction and potential countermeasures.

# OCCUPANT PROTECTION

It is estimated that more than 3,000 lives have been saved on the state's roadways since New York implemented its seat belt law in 1984. While New York's most recent seat belt survey conducted in 1996 indicates that the state's usage rate is above the national average, more than a quarter of the state's motorists are still neglecting to buckle up.

In May 1996, New York State launched the "Buckle-Up New York" campaign, spearheaded by First Lady Libby Pataki and aimed at getting more New Yorkers to use their seat belts. Shortly after that, the federal government launched a "Buckle-Up America" campaign and set an ambitious national goal of 85% usage by the year 2000. The attainment of this goal will depend on expanded efforts and new strategies, incorporating education as well as enforcement, to encourage compliance with the law.

Evidence of the correlation between seat belt use and injury outcome is found in the most recent crash data. Between 1993 and 1996, the proportion of occupants involved in crashes who were killed in vehicles covered by the seat belt law decreased from .22% to .20%, and the proportion receiving serious injuries decreased from 3.04% to 2.66%.

PROPORTION OF OCCUPANTS OF VEHICLES COVERED BY NEW YORK STATE'S SEAT BELT LAW KILLED OR SERIOUSLY INJURED IN CRASHES, 1993-1996						
	1993 n=452,759	1994 n=455,004	1995 n=452,651	1996 n=449,409	1999 Goal	2003 Goal
Fatalities	.22%	.21%	.21%	.20%	.19%	.18%
Serious Injuries	3.04%	2.83%	2.80%	2.66%	2.60%	2.40%

The Mean Severity of Injury (MSI), a measure of the average severity of the injuries suffered by vehicle occupants involved in crashes, also declined from 1.322 in 1993 to 1.280 in 1996.

MEAN SEVERITY OF INJURY (MSI) FOR OCCUPANTS OF VEHICLES COVERED BY NEW YORK STATE'S SEAT BELT LAW, 1993-1996					
1993	1994	1995	1996	1999 Goal	2003 Goal
1.322	1.296	1.295	1.280	1.250	1.200

## GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The primary goals of the occupant protection program area are to decrease the number of vehicle occupants killed and mitigate the severity of the injuries suffered. This will be accomplished by increasing seat belt use and enhancing the safety of young passengers by increasing the number of children under 12 who ride in the back seat and the number of children who are properly restrained in child safety seats. The strategies identified for accomplishing these goals include enforcement, research to identify target groups of motorists who do not comply with the law, public information and education, and training.

## TRAFFIC RECORDS

To accurately identify the nature and location of significant traffic safety problems, and to develop appropriate countermeasures and evaluate their effectiveness, traffic records systems that are accurate, timely, and comprehensive are an absolute necessity. The complexity of the data required, the enormity of the task of collecting and reporting such data, and the increasing need for data analysis in support of traffic safety initiatives require New York to continue to upgrade its automated traffic records systems.

The importance placed on improving the state's traffic record systems is evidenced by the Department of Motor Vehicles' commitment to reengineer its accident and ticket records systems to eliminate the need for paper processing. Based on the strategic plan developed in 1995 under the auspices of the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee and its committee members, the DMV is focusing on the use of new technologies at both the state and local levels to update existing automated systems and/or implement new automated systems, as appropriate. With funding provided by the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, the reengineering of the ticketing system, TSLE&D, is currently underway. A request for proposal to reengineer the accident records system was recently completed. These initiatives will also facilitate linkages among data sets to enhance the information available for decision making by policy makers.

During the past year, the State Police and an increasing number of local police agencies have implemented computer technologies, including both hardware and software, that have enhanced their ability to collect and enter crash information. The recent request for proposal to reengineer the accident records system will enable the DMV to receive crash data electronically from the local agencies. Efforts to expand such capabilities to include the entering of traffic ticket information into the TSLE&D system electronically are also underway. This initiative will further reduce the time lag between the date of a crash and when the information is entered on the automated crash file.

Despite the creation in 1993 of a supplemental crash reporting form to capture information specific to crashes involving trucks and buses (MV104S), this form is not uniformly used by local police agencies. The use of this form is especially low for crashes occurring in New York City and on Long Island. It is expected that the implementation of new technologies under the accident records reengineering effort will address this issue.

## GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The primary goals of the efforts undertaken in the area of traffic records are to 1) continue to support the reengineering of DMV's accident and ticket records system, 2) continue to improve data linkage capabilities among traffic safety-related data systems, and 3) assist with the coordination and direction of efforts to upgrade the state's various traffic safety-related data systems. This will be accomplished through support for the implementation of technologies by agencies at the state level, as well as by local police agencies. The strategies for accomplishing these goals include continued involvement in the state's Safety Management System, increased use of technology for data collection and dissemination, and the development and use of specific data linkages. Another important strategy includes research and evaluation initiatives designed to support problem identification and the development and evaluation of countermeasures in various areas of highway safety.

## DROWSY DRIVING

The number of fatal and personal injury crashes involving drowsy driving continues to decline. In 1996, there were 32 fatal crashes and 2,195 personal injury crashes involving a driver who fell asleep. Fatal injury crashes accounted for 2% of all fatal crashes and 1% of all personal injury crashes in 1996.

<b>"FELL ASLEEP" CRASHES IN NEW YORK STATE, 1993 - 1996</b>						
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1999 Goal	2003 Goal
Fatal Crashes	53	46	43	32	30	26
Injury Crashes	2,202	2,200	2,305	2,195	2,120	2,000

*\* Police-reported crashes only*

To document more fully the scope of the drowsy driving problem in New York State, the state's Task Force on Drowsy Driving, which includes representatives from state agencies, the medical community, the National Sleep Foundation, the trucking industry, and private citizens, continues to collect and disseminate information on drowsy driving. It is expected that this effort will be aided by the change in the police accident report form, effective July 1, 1996, to capture both "fell asleep" and "drowsy driving" as contributing factors in crashes. As a result of this change, police reported crash data for 1997 should begin to address the widely held concern that the incidence of drowsy driving is underreported.

## GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the efforts undertaken in the area of drowsy driving is to further reduce the number of fatal and personal injury "fell asleep" motor vehicle crashes. This will be accomplished by continuing the work of the Task Force on Drowsy Driving and its public information and education efforts, and developing drowsy driving programs that focus on youth and shift workers. The strategies identified to accomplish these goals and objectives include community-based programs for specific target groups and public information and education.

## COMMUNITY TRAFFIC SAFETY PROGRAMS

Community Traffic Safety Programs combine strategies from several traffic safety program areas to address local highway safety problems. Each county is responsible for conducting problem identification to determine its highway safety priorities, establishing performance goals, objectives and measures, and implementing and evaluating strategies that target the priority areas that have been identified.

The strategies implemented under the individual community traffic safety programs will contribute to the attainment of the goals established for the statewide highway safety program. In addition to funding local programs addressing problems identified through the analysis of traffic safety data, the strategies in this area include the further development of interorganizational and target group coalitions, the provision of public information resources, and training for community program managers and staff.

# HIGHWAY ENGINEERING

Responsibility for the more than 115,000 miles of roadways in New York State is shared by the state, counties, towns, and municipalities. Over the four-year period, 1993-1996, approximately 11% of fatal crashes occurred annually on limited access highways, compared to 59% on state, county, and town roads, and 30% on municipal streets. In 1996, 13% of all fatal and injury crashes involved a collision with a fixed object, and 58% of all fatal crashes occurred at sites with no traffic control devices.

Increasing traffic volumes and funding constraints on construction mean that other engineering solutions must be sought to decrease the number and severity of crashes. Engineering solutions may be very cost-effective. For example, while the distribution of crashes by type of roadway system has remained fairly constant over the past several years, recent data show that the installation of rumble strips on the New York State Thruway has resulted in a substantial reduction in "drift-off-road" crashes. Improvements in the location coding of crashes not only helps prevent additional crashes, but improves traffic flow and aids in obtaining prompt medical attention for crash victims.

New York has also begun to implement engineering solutions that include Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) components which combine computer technologies, information and telecommunications with the transportation infrastructure. One example is the use of automated traffic counters that allow metering of vehicles onto the entry ramps of the Long Island Expressway.

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES INVOLVING COLLISION WITH FIXED OBJECTS OR TRAINS IN NEW YORK STATE, 1993-1996						
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1999 Goal	2003 Goal
Fatal and Injury Crashes with Fixed Objects	23,739	22,175	23,710	23,453	22,500	22,000
Train Crashes	31	29	33	20	18	16

## GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the highway engineering program area is to improve traffic safety through the identification and treatment of high accident sites. This will be accomplished by collecting and reporting crash data to the DMV electronically, promoting the expansion of local highway

inventory systems and local geographic information systems, increasing the availability and accessibility of highway safety roadway and management data to all levels of government, and conducting educational programs that address highway/railroad grade crossing safety issues. The strategies identified for accomplishing these goals include continued involvement in the state's Safety Management System, strengthening the Department of Transportation's (DOT) program to treat high accident locations, improving access for bicyclists and pedestrians and promoting their safe interaction in the traffic mix, and reengineering highway/railroad grade crossings wherever practical.

## SCHOOL VEHICLE SAFETY

Each day approximately 35,000 school vehicles transport millions of children to and from school and other educational activities. The responsibility for ensuring the safety of pupils transported by school vehicles is shared by three state agencies: the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Transportation, and the State Education Department. Communication and coordination among these agencies is fostered through participation in the Tri-Agency School Bus Safety Committee.

In the four-year period 1993-1996, an average of 869 school vehicles were involved in crashes. One of the most recognized violations related to school vehicle transportation is "passing a stopped school bus." Operation Safe Stop, a statewide education and enforcement program coordinated by the Department of Motor Vehicles, and other initiatives undertaken by DMV and its partners, have been very successful in addressing this issue. In 1996, 4,710 tickets were issued for this violation compared to 3,848 tickets in 1995. The penalties for this violation were increased as of November 1, 1996, under legislation signed by Governor Pataki.

### GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The goals in the area of school vehicle safety are to reduce both the total number of crashes and the number of fatal crashes involving school vehicles. This will be accomplished by increasing both the number of tickets issued and the conviction rate for passing a stopped school bus, and monitoring owners and operators of school vehicles for compliance with regulatory requirements. The strategies include carrier education and promoting the active participation of carriers in safety initiatives, increasing the awareness of motorists of the issues relating to school vehicle safety, promoting the elimination of standees in school vehicles, training and education programs for both school vehicle operators and passengers, and research and evaluation.

# PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee is responsible for coordinating and managing New York State's comprehensive highway safety program. The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee takes a leadership role in establishing the state's overall traffic safety priorities, assists in identifying priorities at the local level, and works with its partners at both the state and local level to develop programs, public information campaigns, and other activities to address the needs identified. The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee administers all Section 153, 402, and 410 highway safety funds awarded to the state and will administer Section 157 and other incentive funds made available through TEA-21. In administering the state's highway safety program, the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee takes a comprehensive approach, providing funding for a wide variety of programs targeting crash reduction through education, enforcement, community involvement, and greater access to safety-related data.

## GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee's goals in this area are to continue to improve the effectiveness of New York's highway safety program and the efficiency of its administration. This will be accomplished by enhancing the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee's leadership role in identifying priorities and establishing goals for the statewide program, improving the coordination of programs and resources, and promoting innovative approaches to address highway safety issues. The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee will continue to assess the training needs of its partners and identify training opportunities that meet these needs. Communication and access to information and materials will be enhanced through the continuing development of the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee Internet site and other channels. The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee will also provide direction and assistance to the state's public and private traffic safety partners.