



ROAD SAFETY IS PUBLIC HEALTH

Traffic deaths are preventable.

Every person who dies or is seriously injured on a roadway represents more than a transportation statistic: They are parents, children, friends, coworkers, neighbors, students, and members of our communities.

Roadway injuries affect emergency medical systems, hospitals, rehabilitation services, families, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and entire communities. That makes traffic violence a public-health issue.

A Different Way of Thinking About Safety

For decades, roadway safety has often focused on individual behavior: Pay attention. Be careful. Wear bright clothing. Look both ways.

Individual choices matter, but people make mistakes.

A safe transportation system should not require perfect behavior in order for people to survive.

The Safe System Approach

**A Safe System starts with a simple principle:
People make mistakes. Those mistakes should not cost
someone their life.**

That means designing our transportation system around several ideas:

- Death and serious injury are unacceptable.
- Humans make mistakes.
- Humans are physically vulnerable.
- Responsibility for safety is shared.
- Safety must be proactive, not only reactive.
- Redundancy matters—when one protection fails, another should help prevent tragedy.

What Does That Look Like?

It can mean:

Safer roads

Protected crossings, sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, lighting, visibility improvements, traffic calming, and Complete Streets.

Safer speeds

Speeds appropriate for the people and places surrounding a roadway.

Safer vehicles

Technology and vehicle design that help prevent crashes and reduce injury severity.

Safer people

Education and policies that encourage responsible behavior by everyone using the transportation system.

Post-crash care

Rapid emergency response, trauma care, rehabilitation, and support for victims and families.

We Can Choose Something Different

Roadway deaths are not an unavoidable cost of mobility. Communities across the country and around the world are demonstrating that thoughtful design, evidence-based policy, appropriate speeds, and shared responsibility can save lives. Every roadway death prevented means someone gets to go home.



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