

Indiana's Traffic Safety Program

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THE HIGHWAY SAFETY ACT OF 1966

The Highway Safety Act of 1966 requires that each state develop a state-wide, coordinated traffic safety program, with the governor being responsible for its administration. The clear intent of Congress is that the act shall apply to all levels of government within each state, and that such traffic safety programs be designed to reduce traffic accidents, deaths, injuries and property damage resulting therefrom.

The federal highway safety standards have been promulgated to help implement the act, and provide guidelines to state and local governments in developing the type of program that will realize this vital objective.

SURVEY OF INDIANA'S HIGHWAY SAFETY ACTIVITIES

Of immediate concern to us in Indiana, is the need to determine what must be done to meet requirements of the federal standards and to qualify for financial assistance in upgrading traffic safety program performance. What are our strong areas? What are our weak areas? Where and to what degree does the state fail to measure up to the performance standards? We felt we had to know the answers to these questions before we could attempt to build a long-range traffic safety program, take appropriate action to upgrade program activities to desired levels and to apply a realistic cost estimate on our traffic program.

Assessment at State and Local Levels

A true assessment of Indiana's highway safety performance, at the state and local level, entailed an extensive fact finding program—one that delved into nearly every facet of highway safety. We felt it necessary to make such a survey to help determine the present deficiencies and to program future improvements, for such a survey had not been conducted before.

The National Safety Council was contacted and a project was submitted for approval by the federal government. This highway safety

program analysis project would cover 175 separate governmental units within the state, consisting of 92 counties and 83 cities. This means that all counties were covered as were all cities of 5,000 population or over.

The analysis was designed to provide our department with factual information upon which decisions could be made involving safety standard priorities for the statewide comprehensive and local traffic safety programs. In addition, it would provide participating cities and counties with an assessment of needs which could provide a basis for community action programs.

Existing Conditions Compared to Standards

This highway safety analysis would make a comparison of the counties' and cities' traffic safety activities with national standards prescribed by the National Highway Safety Bureau and with other professional standards prescribed by the National Safety Council. Specific recommendations will and have been made to help the counties and cities bring their level of activities into line with the above-mentioned standards. An overall analysis summary of major recommendations and statistical data gathered will be prepared for the purpose of determining local and statewide programs needed to meet the standard of the Highway Safety Act of 1966.

Sixteen Standards of Highway Safety Act Listed

From time to time, we have mentioned the 16 standards covered under the Highway Safety Act of 1966. These standards are:

1. Periodic motor vehicle inspection
2. Motor vehicle registration
3. Motorcycle safety
4. Driver's licensing
5. Driver education
6. Codes and laws
7. Traffic courts
8. Alcohol in relation to highway safety
9. Identification and surveillance of accident locations
10. Traffic records
11. Emergency medical services
12. Highway design, construction and maintenance
13. Traffic control devices
14. Pedestrian safety
15. Police traffic services
16. Debris hazard control and cleanup

Recommendations and Traffic Safety Councils for Localities

This study has evaluated the compliance of all cities and counties and has made recommendations in an effort to help the local communities realize compliance of the standards. To date, the analysis has been presented in 17 counties and 19 cities and the response has generally been very high. The main recommendation in all surveys has been to organize a traffic safety council in all counties or cities in an effort to work on the elimination of the present deficiencies.

Cooperation of Local Governments A Must

In order to fully achieve the goals of the state program, local government participation is required; local government involvement is necessary and local elected official support is a prerequisite. For no matter how well federal and state governments develop plans, local governments implement those plans. Planning and administration of statewide highway safety programs must involve the participation of local governments by virtue of the fact that most operational requirements of the national highway safety program standards are carried out at the local level. This is why we feel that local governments must become involved in the fight for traffic safety.

TRAFFIC RECORD WORKSHOPS FOR LOCAL PERSONNEL

Another project that has been completed in Indiana is the traffic records workshops conducted by the National Safety Council. This project was designed to bring to personnel of local traffic records systems detailed information on:

1. Provisions of the National Highway Safety Bureau Standards pertaining to traffic records development and maintenance.
2. Local traffic records system data bases with emphasis on the use of developed data in planning and implementing the local highway safety programs.
3. State requirements pertaining to the records that must be developed in local jurisdictions for the state traffic records system.

The National Safety Council presented its traffic records system workshop, supplemented by the requirements of the Indiana state records system to local traffic records system personnel in ten workshops at appropriate regional locations. Communities—comprising both cities and counties—represented jurisdictions of suitable size for a local traffic records system supporting the state traffic records system.

Data Covered in Workshops

The traffic records system workshop lasted for three days. The following basic subjects relating to local traffic records systems were covered:

1. Traffic accident records, including accident reports, spot maps, location files, summaries, and other related procedures and techniques designed to provide traffic accident prevention data.
2. Police traffic service records, including enforcement records, surveillance of accident locations, selective enforcement, and related techniques designed to reduce the number and severity of traffic accidents.
3. Street or traffic engineering records, including traffic volumes, traffic flow, physical and operating features, collision diagrams, and other movement of vehicular traffic.
4. Traffic records systems services, including typical services involved in the planning and implementing of the local highway safety program.
5. Specific requirements of the state traffic records system applicable to all local traffic records systems.

The most significant feature of these workshops was that all participants were able to learn firsthand what is expected of them and their jurisdictions in the overall state program.

A STUDY OF TRAFFIC COURTS

The next step in furthering Indiana's traffic safety program was to enter into an agreement with the American Bar Association to conduct a study of the various courts throughout the state adjudicating traffic cases. This study was to include the following items:

1. A study and review of state laws relating to the system of courts handling traffic cases as presently established and operating, from the standpoint of organization of these courts, their jurisdiction and procedure available to them.
2. A study and review of the state laws relating to the methods of prosecution of traffic cases available to enforcement agencies which may file traffic cases in these courts.
3. A study and evaluation of the system of courts handling traffic cases as presently established and operating from the standpoint of pre-court processing, court room processing, and post-court processing and disposition of traffic cases as part of the traffic law enforcement program of the State of Indiana.
4. A study and evaluation of possible need for constitutional and legislative changes in laws establishing and governing the system of courts now handling traffic cases.

5. A study and evaluation of the range of penalties available to these courts trying traffic cases from the standpoint of the correctional and educational aspects thereof.
6. A study of the statistics relating to caseload, revenue, and cost of operation of the courts trying traffic cases in the State of Indiana, if such is available.
7. A study and evaluation of the judicial personnel, prosecution personnel, clerical and administrative personnel available to these courts, a determination of the adequacy thereof.
8. A study of the availability of statewide supervision and administration of these courts.

Legislation Will Be Recommended

This study is not yet completed. Upon completion, we hope to be able to submit recommended legislation or recommend whatever changes necessary to put us in compliance with the national standards for the improvement of the administration of justice in traffic courts.

RADAR, BREATHALIZERS AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Our department has funded 687 radar units throughout the State of Indiana. We have also participated in the placement of 42 breathalizers in the state for the testing of drinking drivers. Eighteen projects have also been approved for breathalyzer training with 39 trainees taking part.

With our assistance, 56 officers have been able to attend the traffic training course at Northwestern Institute. Six major driver education projects have been approved for Indiana schools. These projects include extensive driver education programs, complete with simulators.

Two projects now in the planning stages are being designed to help local communities in their traffic safety programs including the traffic control device project and the bridge rating and inspection project.

THE ALCOHOL COUNTERMEASURES COUNCIL

Finally, the most important program of our office was recently established—the Alcohol Countermeasures Council. Through its chairman, the Alcohol Countermeasures Council participates in the activities of our traffic safety coordinating committee—the administrative body responsible for the development and coordination of a comprehensive highway safety program in Indiana.

Objectivities of the Council

Council members are representatives of the various groups, agencies and organizations that have important roles in promoting and effecting

alcohol countermeasures. Indiana's Alcohol Countermeasures Council has 10 specific objectives. These objectives are:

1. The preparation, and constant updating, of a statewide plan for implementing an alcohol countermeasures program.
2. The coordination of the activities of the member bodies into a comprehensive, cooperative alcohol countermeasures program.
3. The establishment of working relationships between state and local government, including the different branches of these governments, and of other involved bodies all aimed at achieving the primary objective: reduction of traffic crashes due to alcohol.
4. The development of criteria of performance which will allow the state to evaluate its alcohol countermeasures program.
5. The promotion of training and certification for personnel at all levels of government in the operation of equipment which measures the concentration of alcohol in the body.
6. The development and promotion of a program to effectively educate Indiana citizens concerning the dangers and effects of drinking and driving.
7. The assurance that records and data will be maintained for evaluation of the program, plus the provision of periodic reports.
8. The development of criteria necessary to qualify for state and federal funds to support state and local alcohol countermeasures programs.
9. The proposal and review of research projects or studies related to the development of the alcohol countermeasures program.
10. The performance of other duties necessary to the advancement of the state alcohol countermeasures program, as directed by the director of the Department of Traffic Safety and Vehicle Inspection.

CONCLUSION

I want to stress that this is a working council. All council members, or their representatives, devote a great deal of their time and energy to our program.

For the first time in many years, we have a state administration that is actively concerned about the needless death and destruction on our highways.

Governor Whitcomb has given our traffic safety program his full support. Because of his interest in our program, and because he is actively backing some of our projects, we will be able to further improve Indiana's traffic safety program. By doing this, we will be able to reduce the number of traffic deaths in our state.