What is a Safety Corridor?

Safety corridors are stretches of state and local highways with an incidence of fatal or injury traffic crashes higher than the statewide average for that type of roadway. These may be signed as "Safety Corridors" or "Truck Safety Corridors". In the case of "Truck Safety Corridors", the incidence of commercial vehicle involvement is high, due to either truck or other vehicle error.

Typical actions taken in safety corridors to increase safety include more frequent enforcement, low cost engineering improvements and education efforts such as media events, brochures and poster distribution. Drivers are asked to pay extra attention and carefully obey all traffic laws when driving in these areas.

How does a stretch of roadway become a safety corridor?

Designation as a safety corridor comes as a result of a request from a Legislator, a neighborhood group, and organization, family or individual. This is followed by an in-depth look at crash statistics to determine if the problem being reported is an isolated incident or a longstanding pattern.

For designation, the corridor must have a three-year average of the local fatal and serious injury crash rate that exceeds the statewide average for a similar roadway. This ensures that that a persistent problem is being addressed.

There must be a commitment by state and/or local law enforcement to provide a patrol emphasis on the corridor. Enforcement is the single most effective short-term tool in reducing traffic crashes in safety corridors.

The final decision on designation lies with a team consisting of ODOT's Traffic Management Section, Transportation Safety Division and the appropriate Region Traffic and Maintenance District offices.

Care and feeding of a safety corridor

At formal designation, there is usually press coverage explaining the purpose for the safety corridor and the improvements planned. State and/or local enforcement typically heightens patrol emphasis and state crews may make minor engineering enhancements.

During the life of the safety corridor, a series of annual plans are developed. These lay out the expected treatments committed to by state and local officials and organizations. At a minimum they include:

- Enforcement: A minimum of 50 regular hours per month in addition to any overtime scheduled for the corridor. (This is a multi-agency total)
- Education: A minimum of four quarterly public information efforts. This may be a combination of print, radio. TV, cable, billboards theater ads, presentations to local

schools, civic groups, etc.

- Engineering: Annual review of traffic control devices (signing, striping, pavement markings and delineation) on the corridor for compliance with current standards.

The strengths of the safety corridor program, simply put, are as follows:

- Quick implementation
- Multi-faceted and effective solutions
- Local involvement

When is a safety corridor not a safety corridor anymore?

As mentioned above, scarce resources are most effectively used when addressing a significant problem. When the problem roadway shows improvements over a three-year period which bring crash or fatality rates within statewide averages, the corridor may be recommended for decommissioning.

The recommendation is presented for local stakeholder approval. If local approval is gained, safety corridor signing is removed. It is important to note that this does not mean that no further emphasis is given to safety on the corridor. State and local enforcement typically include these stretches in their tactical plans and voluntarily continue at least a routine level of patrols. Necessary maintenance and safety needs will continue to be met.

If locals wish to retain safety corridor status, there must be a commitment of resources by that local group in terms of public outreach and enforcement.

Questions?

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