

Oregon Transportation Safety Committee

(Oregon Revised Statutes 802.300, 802.310, 802.315, 802.320, 336.802, 802.325, and 813.600)

The Oregon Transportation Safety Committee has its roots in the federal Highway Safety Act of 1966. In response to that Act, the Oregon legislature created a governor appointed Oregon Transportation Safety Commission in 1967 (ORS 802.300).

A newly created position of Governor's Representative for Highway Safety, and the Commission, were assigned to advise the governor regarding laws and activities to address the growing problem of highway safety, and to manage and conduct a program to address safety on the roadways. In 1991 the Commission and Representative were moved by the Oregon Legislature to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) as part of a reorganization of state government.

State laws were subsequently re-written to place the Commission as a Committee with an advisory role to the Oregon Transportation Commission and under law, the Committee retained certain decision making responsibilities as part of the new organizational structure. With the move, Commission Staff became employees of ODOT, forming the Transportation Safety Division. Subsequent reorganization formed into what is now ODOT-DMV's Transportation Safety Office. The DMV Administrator serves as the Governor's Representative for Highway Safety (GR).

Specific topical areas of direct influence include the motorcycle safety program (ORS 802.320), bicyclist safety program (ORS 802.325), ignition interlock program (ORS 813.600), and teen driver education program (ORS 336.802).

The Committee is on point to lead and approve the statewide highway safety program across all state, local, other related Governor-appointed Committees, non-profit and volunteer organizations (ORS 802.310). From the first Commission to the Oregon Transportation Safety Committee of today, the group works to develop an annual plan that lists highway safety grant projects and activities to be conducted in Oregon. The plan, known by the names Highway Safety Plan or Performance Plan, is presented for adoption to the Oregon Transportation Commission each year before submission to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for federal funding approval.

The Committee consists of five-members appointed by the Governor, as recommended by the Oregon Transportation Commission. The Committee typically meets monthly, hosts planning sessions for the upcoming grant year, sponsors an annual statewide highway safety conference, and participates in task forces or as a liaison to other governor-appointed or statewide committees as appointed by the Chair.

Over the past 50 years the Committee has helped usher in new or improved laws in the areas of teen driving, ignition interlocks, child safety seats, distracted driving, speed, work zones, motorcycle safety training, safe routes to school, safe and courteous driving, pedestrian safety, impaired driving, and has testified on dozens of other highway safety topics.

Committee members are eligible to receive a stipend for every day they conduct work as a committee member. Mileage, meals, and overnight accommodations are reimbursed at the state approved rates.