



# STRAC

STATEWIDE TRAFFIC RECORDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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2007 ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTED TO THE DIRECTORS OF:

- ▶ COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
- ▶ COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT
- ▶ COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
- ▶ COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
- ▶ COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
- ▶ COLORADO JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

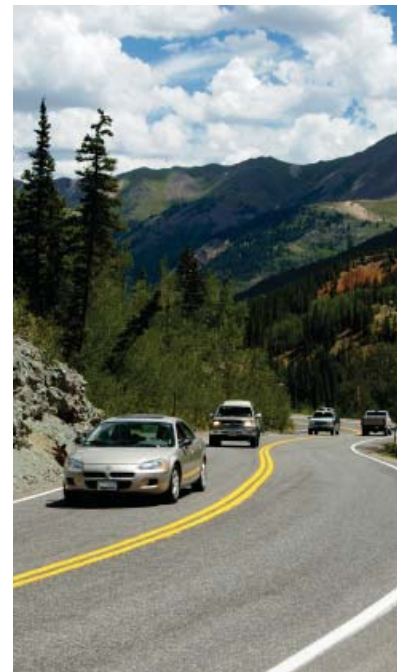


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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Statewide Traffic Records Advisory Committee (STRAC) is Colorado's comprehensive advisory group with representation from the interests of all levels of public and private sector traffic safety stakeholders, as well as the wide range of disciplines that have need for traffic safety information. This committee was formed within state policy and legal guidelines and institutionalized and empowered with the responsibility to recommend policy on traffic records. STRAC provides a mechanism to ensure support for the administration and continuance of the coordinating committee as well as technical guidelines.

## STRAC MISSION STATEMENT

Provide accurate, timely, reliable, consistent, and accessible data and information to managers for use in the identification of transportation related safety problems, for developing and evaluating countermeasures to address those problems, for effective policy formulation and decision making and for the efficient allocation of resources to solve safety problems.

## 2007 STRAC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Throughout 2007, STRAC held four quarterly meetings and several subcommittee meetings in which we discussed many aspects of traffic records. Members participated in a few conferences, including the national Traffic Records Forum. Six projects were undertaken: two were completed, two are on-going and two extended into 2008. We showed improvement in our performance measures, securing our funding for FY 2007.

## 2008 STRAC GOALS

STRAC is planning a restructuring, complete with new officers and new subcommittees. We will implement the new performance measures and continue to attempt to secure federal 408 funding, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Five projects are planned for 2008, in addition to the two that were extended from 2007. The greatest prospect will be the creation of the Virtual Data Warehouse (VDW).

"Highway safety information systems provide the information which is critical to the development of policies and programs that maintain the safety and the operation of the nation's roadway transportation network."



Colorado Department of Transportation



## INTRODUCTION

STRAC is a committee formed as part of a federally sponsored effort to collect, organize, analyze, and utilize all types of information relating to accidents that occur on Colorado roadways. The membership of STRAC is composed of the six major State Agencies. In reference to Traffic Records, our responsibilities are:

- ▶ The Colorado Department of Revenue (CDOR) is the custodian of accident report records and data received from all law enforcement agencies throughout the state. The accident report can contain over 200 data elements that includes information on the drivers and individuals involved, any injuries and fatalities, property damage, vehicle information, location and time of the accident, weather conditions, roadway characteristics and any traffic violations cited. This data, combined with the driving record data of the drivers, forms the foundation of the state Virtual Data Warehouse.
- ▶ Colorado State Patrol (CSP) is the lead law enforcement agency to utilize the Accident Report. Law enforcement, typically the first on the scene, controls the crash site and gathers the Accident Report data.
- ▶ Colorado Judicial Department is responsible for reporting convictions for various traffic violations.
- ▶ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) coordinates the activities of the Emergency Medical and Trauma Services system related to roadway crashes. This information is another example of data needed to finish crash reports.
- ▶ Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) provides treatments related to the crash citations such as substance abuse to the DUI offenders.



Colorado Department of  
Human Services



- ▶ Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) uses the traffic records to develop engineering, education, and/or enforcement solutions and funding to improve roadway safety.
- ▶ Local Agencies include local law enforcement, education, traffic engineers, courts, medical providers, and other data suppliers and users.

Collectively, the State Agencies, in cooperation with the Local Agencies, work to coordinate the crash data components of every reportable motor vehicle crash on public roads. The data gathered is consistent with other national systems including the federal Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria, the Fatality Analysis Reporting System, the General Estimates System, the Federal Motor Carriers, the National Emergency Medical Services Information System and the National Trauma Registry.

Recognizing the sensitivity of the crash data, the integrated data system will allow each agency to have full custody and control of their respective data, while ultimately providing more detailed information about the crash and the impact on the individuals involved. With information from the integrated data system, agencies will be able to coordinate their efforts and programs. This is designed to reduce roadway fatalities, injuries and property damage and the related economic impact to Colorado, while maintaining the integrity and privacy of each agency's data.

### STRAC RESPONSIBILITIES

- ▶ Adopt requirements for file structure and data integration.
- ▶ Assess capabilities and resources.
- ▶ Establish goals for improving the traffic records system.
- ▶ Evaluate the system.
- ▶ Develop cooperation and support from stakeholders.
- ▶ Ensure that high quality and timely data will be available for all qualified users.

### STRAC MISSION STATEMENT

Provide accurate, timely, reliable, consistent, and accessible data and information to managers for use in the identification of transportation related safety problems, for developing and evaluating countermeasures to address those problems, for effective policy formulation and decision making and for the efficient allocation of resources to solve safety problems.

Colorado's traffic records system is a virtual system comprised of independent crash data that collectively form the information base for the management of the highway and traffic safety activities. The different sources of a traffic records system can be found within six State Agencies. Collectively these State Agencies, in cooperation with Local Agencies, use the data to develop initiatives to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes on the state's roadways that result in economic losses to Colorado.

With information from the integrated data system, agencies will be able to coordinate their efforts and programs. This is designed to reduce roadway fatalities, injuries and property damage and the related economic impact to Colorado, while maintaining the integrity and privacy of each agency's data.

The National Agenda for the Improvement of Highway Safety Information Systems, a product of the National Safety Council's Traffic Records Coordinating Committee states:

“Highway safety information systems provide the information which is critical to the development of policies and programs that maintain the safety and the operation of the nation’s roadway transportation network.”

As such, a complete traffic records program is necessary for problem identification, planning, operational management and control, and evaluation of Colorado’s roadway safety activities. Colorado, in cooperation with its political subdivisions, established and implemented a complete traffic records program. This program includes and provides information for the entire state. The traffic records program is critical to the implementation of all roadway safety countermeasures and is the key ingredient to their effective and efficient management and performance measurement.

“Highway safety information systems provide the information which is critical to the development of policies and programs that maintain the safety and the operation of the nation’s roadway transportation network.”



# 2007 PROGRESSIVE ACTIVITIES

## A. ACCIDENT REPORT REVISION

Colorado achieved full implementation of the revised report in January 2007.

## B. STRUCTURE OF STRAC

Previously, STRAC, originally organized in 1975, operated as a two-tier basic task oriented committee comprised of an executive committee and general membership that did not meet regularly. While STRAC did have broad representation with particular emphasis on traffic engineering and law enforcement, it did not represent the whole community of public and private stakeholders nor did the executive committee include top-level leaders to make management and resource commitments for traffic record improvements. STRAC's 'general membership' consisted of a single individual from the agencies to serve as the traffic records champion for Colorado.

The 2004 Traffic Records Assessment made several recommendations of which many have already been incorporated into STRAC's organizational structure. One such recommendation was to include top-level policymakers within the executive committee. Another was to include a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the six State Agencies signed by each agency's executive director. This was originally executed on March 6, 2006 and is being updated with Governor Ritter's cabinet appointments. Currently, STRAC, with CDOT as the coordinating agency, is formally structured with membership to encompass all state, federal, and local agencies involved in roadway safety as well as other groups and associations. STRAC now meets quarterly with fixed dates and locations. For 2008, STRAC has chosen to meet on the fourth Thursday of January, April, July and October. In addition, STRAC has adopted bylaws and has identified and formed seven subcommittees. These subcommittees are as follows:

**Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Enforcement.** The DUI subcommittee was formed by the CDOT Impaired Driving Program. A statewide Impaired Driving Assessment was performed that identified issues that require crash data to resolve some of the recommendations; therefore the CDOT Impaired



Driving Program Manager will be part of STRAC to coordinate resolution of the recommendations that interface with the Traffic Records Assessment recommendations. In addition, the STRAC DUI Subcommittee is also involved in the Colorado legislatively mandated Interagency Task Force on Drunk Driving.

**Accident and Crash Reporting.** This subcommittee was formed to implement full integration of the Accident Report and data process that ensures timely and correct data gathering for all crash related information.

**System and Data Protocol.** This subcommittee was formed to coordinate the various systems and to monitor the integration of data to ensure that no agency data is compromised.

**Media and Education.** This subcommittee was formed to integrate STRAC activities with other agency activities and to develop educational materials related to the various systems. This year, the sub-committee is being reorganized, with two new co-chairs.

**Conference.** This subcommittee was formed to coordinate all the various conferences to ensure coverage and data gathering or identification of data needs. In addition, this subcommittee will be looking into any needed conference to promote Colorado's STRAC activities.

**Local Agencies.** This subcommittee comprised of members from local agencies, addresses issues and concerns regarding the data gathering needs of these organizations. This subcommittee has changed membership, with a change in personnel at the agencies.

**Performance Measures.** A new sub-committee was formed to examine and re-define our performance measures that we use to monitor our project's progress. They met in December, 2007, and laid the foundation to provide NHTSA with acceptable wording and measurable items, according to their suggested guidelines.

These subcommittees have their respective chairs, membership, and provide status report of activities at each quarterly STRAC meeting.

## C. STRATEGIC PLAN TO RESOLVE THE TRAFFIC RECORDS ASSESSMENT

**Development of a Strategic Plan with Short-, Medium-, Long-Term Goals.** Consistent with the 2004 Traffic Records Assessment a strategic plan has been developed. While much has been achieved in upgrading and improving the traffic records system in Colorado, significant problems remain. Most databases still function as "islands of information" with limited data sharing and transfer. As such, data is inconsistent from one database to another. The quality of some data is questionable and accessibility, particularly for managers, is also limited. The desired concept of "one stop shopping" with comprehensive, complete, accurate, timely and accessible data has not yet been achieved.

It is vital for managers to have reliable data upon which to make decisions concerning policy formulation and the allocation of resources. Data collection, access and quality must be improved.

The 2005 Strategic Plan for Traffic Records provided a number of recommendations to improve the traffic records system. The most important and the highest priority is the development of an event based State Virtual Data Warehouse which will include, at least initially, statewide information on motor vehicle crashes and traffic citations. Crashes and citations will be tracked through the system from the time the event begins until its ultimate resolution. While the need for this information for both operational and research purposes is well understood, extreme care will be given to protect the privacy of the individual agencies involved in order to be in compliance with federal and state confidentiality laws. The preliminary phase of this project is scheduled to start in 2008.

It is vital for managers to have reliable data upon which to make decisions concerning policy formulation and the allocation of resources.

There are five core strategies in the strategic plan, along with related steps to complete, and numerous recommendations for improvement. The recommendations are categorized as near term (initiated in 2006 and 2007), intermediate term (2007 to 2010) and long term (2010 and beyond and ongoing projects). The following lists the five core strategies and the highest priority projects to address those strategies beginning in 2006.

- 1. Strengthen the organizational structure for guiding improvement to Colorado's Traffic Records System.** STRAC developed a mechanism for identifying, selecting and implementing changes to Colorado's traffic records system and continually improving the ability of this system to meet the safety related information needs of state and local organizations with a traffic safety mission. STRAC intends to update the Strategic Plan as part of the VDW development.
- 2. Establish common standards to ensure the compatibility of systems and comparability of the data.** The improvement of the existing Colorado Traffic Records System will be guided by STRAC in ways that ensures compatibility and facilitates that use of the data for analysis to meet our user needs. STRAC facilitates the enhancement of the traffic records system and improves timeliness, accessibility, completeness, accuracy, and usefulness of the system.

Colorado needs to develop a state Virtual Data Warehouse to serve as the source for an event based official, complete version of motor vehicle crash data and citation data including information added or corrected by all agencies with responsibility for components of the traffic records system. This system will incorporate extracts of all other traffic records components, including the existing Electronic Accident Reporting

It is vital for managers to have reliable data upon which to make decisions concerning policy formulation and the allocation of resources.

System, the Electronic Citation Reporting System, and Colorado Integrated Criminal Justice Information System. The project to develop this system is scheduled to begin this year.

- 3. Meet user requirements for traffic safety information.** This will ensure that those involved in system design and development are provided with detailed information on how the data is used, what data is needed, and in what form they need it. This includes the event based crash and citation Virtual Data Warehouse, paving the way for improvements in the Colorado Traffic Records System to proceed from a user-centered approach.

Eliminate limitations on customer's use of the data by providing training, communication and analytic tools and by surmounting administrative and legislative barriers to uses of the Colorado Traffic Records System.

Five steps are suggested in the Strategic Plan for this core issue. Three steps will be addressed in the first phase of the VDW Project. The other two, along with any additional issues from the first three steps, will be addressed after completion of the first phase.

The proposed Virtual Data Warehouse will ensure each agency's data integrity and privacy.

- 4. Ensure the expeditious collection, management and accurate transfer of data among state and local jurisdictions.** Identify potential improvements in data sharing among components of the Colorado Traffic Records System and support their implementation. Facilitate the improvement in data sharing. Develop an event based State Virtual Data Warehouse to serve as the source for an official, complete version of motor vehicle crash data and citation data including information added or corrected by all agencies with responsibility for components of the Traffic Records System. Incorporate extracts of all other traffic records components into the State Virtual Data Warehouse.

There are five steps suggested in the Strategic Plan, all of which are not yet completed. Although some activities have begun, this area will be fully pursued during 2008 and beyond.

- 5. Provide an environment for (data driven) analysis, decision making, policy formulation, and resource allocation.** To provide appropriate decision-making support to all levels of the traffic records safety organizations. There is one step that is being done ongoing in conjunction with all other strategies.

STRAC membership and all the participating agencies believe that the partnerships and coordination provided for in this strategic plan will create the environment for improving the traffic records system by

The proposed Virtual Data Warehouse will ensure each agency's data integrity and privacy.

maximizing efficiencies through interagency cooperation and leveraging of existing resources. The additional funding provided by SAFETEA-LU will provide significant funding with which the recommended improvements can be implemented.

With both the strategic plan and the MOU in place, Colorado is moving forward in a timely and effective manner to improve the traffic records system.

#### D. OBTAINING FUNDING FOR THE VARIOUS TRAFFIC RECORDS SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENTS

CDOT applied for a grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and was successful in obtaining funds for the four federal fiscal years 2006 through 2009 of at least one half million dollars per year, if we continue to show improvement in our performance measures.

Through the planned projects, the funding will:

- ▶ Improve the timeliness, accuracy, completeness, uniformity, integration and accessibility of the safety data.
- ▶ Move forward in a timely and effective manner to improve the overall traffic records system according to the revised strategic plan and MOU.
- ▶ Evaluate the effectiveness of the efforts to make such improvements and provide an annual report on grant activities and accomplishments to NHTSA.
- ▶ Improve the compatibility of the data systems with national and state traffic safety data systems and enhance NHTSA's ability to observe and analyze national trends in crash occurrences, rates, outcomes, and circumstances.

The grant projects will measure timeliness, uniformity, completeness, accuracy, accessibility, and data integration using data from crashes, roadway/geographic information systems, driver, vehicle, citation/adjudication, and injury surveillance and emergency medical services.

The projects will be planned in conjunction with the following Agencies: Human Services, Public Health and Environment, Safety, Revenue, Transportation and Judicial. In addition, projects will be funded for local agencies for their traffic records systems and processes. The projects proposed were evaluated by CDOT as well as STRAC membership. Six projects for section 408 funding were selected in 2006. Status of these projects is as follows:

- ▶ Emergency Medical Services Linkage for \$48k with CDPHE. (Completed)

With both the strategic plan and the MOU in place, Colorado is moving forward in a timely and effective manner to improve the overall traffic records system.

The grant will measure timeliness, consistency, completeness, accuracy, accessibility, and data integration for all projects.

- ▶ Location Data on Crash Reports for \$250k with CSP. (Completed)
- ▶ Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Registry Data for \$100k with CDPHE. (On-going)
- ▶ CDOT Traffic Record Enhancements for \$45k. (On –going).
- ▶ Electronic Accident Reporting System enhancement for \$150k with CDOR. (Extended)
- ▶ Crash Location Enhancements Using Unique Intersection Identification and Transfer of Denver Accident Reports to CDOR for \$35k. (Extended)

NHTSA provided funding of \$620k. Augmented by funding from the Federal Highway Administration flexible funding provided to CDOT. In addition to the FHWA funding, each state agency has also provided funding for the enhancement of the Traffic Records System.

The Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration (FMCSA) awarded a grant to the State of Colorado to improve the timeliness, consistency, accuracy, completeness, accessibility, and integration of commercial vehicle crash and citation information. Funds are to be used to develop data collection modules for crash and citation information.





# 2007 STRAC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2007, the STRAC committee accomplished the following:

- ▶ Revised and implemented Form DR2447 for consistency with various agencies and improve data collection.
- ▶ Completed the electronic transfer of ticket dispositions to the Department of Revenue (Division of Motor Vehicles - DMV) in 2005. This process continued to improve through training and programming changes.
- ▶ Instituted and met the eligibility requirement of use of Grant Funds by addressing the key performance measures, e.g., timeliness, accuracy, completeness, uniformity, integration, and accessibility as a standard for project evaluation.
- ▶ Defined new Performance Measures in projects to provide more accurate and measurable quantities for projects' progress as mandated by NHTSA.
- ▶ Published the first Annual STRAC Report (2006) in March, 2007.
- ▶ Participated in the 33rd International Traffic Records Forum. Representatives included a Traffic Engineer (CDOT) and a project manager (Judicial Department - the only Judicial representative in the country).
- ▶ Coordinated program funding availability to system needs to maximize benefits to the overall users.
- ▶ The Colorado State Patrol (CSP) implemented electronic reporting, including citations. These reports are transmitted to the Department of Revenue and are accessible to other agencies. They mark the beginning of the end of paper reporting and the integration of systems statewide.



Colorado Department of Public Safety

“Highway safety information systems provide the information which is critical to the development of policies and programs that maintain the safety and the operation of the nation’s roadway transportation network.”

- ▶ The CSP completed installation and connection of 340 modems in patrol cars to help provide GPS coordinates and electronic reporting to their headquarters more accurately and timely. CSP also purchased 6 enhanced GPS hand-held units for their Accident Reconstruction Teams (FARS exclusively).
- ▶ The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Trauma Registry have expanded their coverage of the percentage of medical reports that are included with the accident reports. EMS also increased their timeliness by increasing their percentage of reports received within 90 days.
- ▶ The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment completed a Data Linkage Project, demonstrating that files can be linked to increase completeness of reports.
- ▶ The Department of Revenue continued their work on the Electronic Accident Reporting System by installing a second scanner, and contracted for software enhancements.
- ▶ The City & County of Denver initiated a project to improve the accuracy of crash locations in automated accident reports to the state by using unique intersection identifiers.
- ▶ The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) continued their computer enhancements to allow easier transfer of crash data from DOR’s EARS to CDOT’s accident database.
- ▶ A review of the 2004 Traffic Records Assessment demonstrated that of the 98 recommendations made in 2004, 31 had been completed (many are on-going), 30 were in process of being completed, and 29 were planned. The eight remaining recommendations had no immediate plans to initiate, but will be considered in the future.

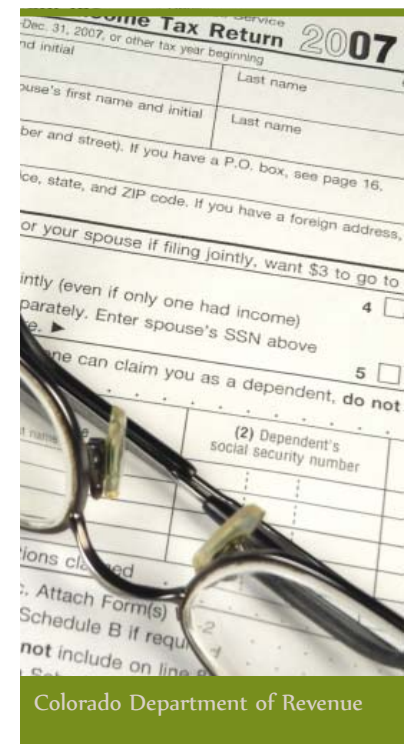
Both the planned and completed projects are in conjunction with State Agencies: Human Services, Public Health and Environment, Safety, Revenue, Transportation and Judicial, which are involved in traffic records. The projects proposed were evaluated by CDOT as well as STRAC membership.

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## 2008 STRAC GOALS

- ▶ Modify and implement new Performance Measures used for projects and for the 408 (Traffic Records) Application to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), according to NHTSA's new standards. This will allow more accurate tracking of the progress made for NHTSA's and our review.
- ▶ Update the interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the six State Agencies. Due to the change in Colorado's Governor, new executive directors have been appointed. Therefore STRAC will reconfirm and resign the MOU with the respective new state executive directors. This is expected to be completed in May, 2008.
- ▶ Prepare Request for Proposal for the Data Development Process to begin the integration of the various data systems into the traffic data integration and analysis system referred to in this document as Virtual Data Warehouse, i.e., VDW.
- ▶ Hire a Consultant Firm to explore our options for the best plan of action for the comprehensive VDW and present these options to the STRAC.
- ▶ Choose the plan for VDW which best suits the overall needs of all state and local Agencies and begin to implement this plan.
- ▶ Adopt and develop the project plan for the VDW project to coordinate the integration of the various data systems into the VDW schema.
- ▶ Coordinate the VDW with local agencies to develop a strategy to integrate state data to local systems.
- ▶ Continue to develop Key Performance Measures tracking progress (i.e., Timeliness, Accuracy, Completeness, Uniformity, Integration, and Accessibility).



- ▶ Continue to coordinate program funding availability to system needs to maximize benefits to the overall users. The VDW project will be a priority and require a large portion of our 408 federal funding.
- ▶ Begin the Electronic Citation Project (Judicial Department) which will send ticket information electronically from law enforcement to Judicial, DMV and the District Attorney Council. This will begin with the CSP citations, but can be duplicated with any or all law enforcement agencies.
- ▶ Develop Project Delivery Acceptance Process of the ongoing projects to ensure compliance with funding and system expectations.
- ▶ Establish a new subcommittee to update the Strategic Plan annually and the MOU (if STRAC deems it necessary).
- ▶ Review the existing subcommittees; dismiss and create new ones to align with the needs of the Virtual Data Warehouse.
- ▶ STRAC will continue to meet quarterly, with sub-committee meetings as needed.



# APPENDIX A

## EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Russell George, CDOT	Director Peter Weir, CDPS Director
Roxanne Huber, CDOR Director	James Martin, CDPHE Director
Karen Beye, CDHS Director	Gerald A Marroney, State Court Administrator

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Colorado Judicial Department

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## EXISTING SUB-COMMITTEES

Accident Report  
System and Protocol  
Driving Under the Influence  
Media and Education  
Safety Forum  
Local Agencies

## CHAIR

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C. Steve Hooper (CDOR)  
Glenn Davis (CDOT)  
Heather Halpape (CDOT)  
Marcee Allen (FWHA)  
Dave Weaver (Denver)

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SAFETY DOESN'T HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT