



NHTSA

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

NHTSA Impaired Driving Update

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May 23, 2022*



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration



NHTSA's mission is to save lives, prevent injuries and reduce economic costs due to road traffic crashes through education, research, safety standards and enforcement activity.



2020 Fatal Motor Vehicle Crash Update Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS)

- 38,824 Traffic Fatalities
- 6.8% Increase in fatalities from 2019
- 11,653 Alcohol-impaired fatalities (14% increase)

Early estimate for 2021 just released:

- 42,915 Traffic Fatalities (10.5% increase)



Examination of the Traffic Safety Environment During the Second Quarter of 2020

Special Report

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

TRAFFIC SAFETY FACTS

Research Note

DOT HS 813 069 Behavioral Safety Research January 2021

Update to Special Reports on Traffic Safety During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency: Third Quarter Data

Authors: Office of Behavioral Safety Research

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is continuing its exploration of traffic safety work during the COVID-19 public health emergency. This work is crucial to furthering our understanding of changes in potentially dangerous driving behaviors, and allows us to expand or evolve countermeasures to meet current needs in States and across the country.

In October 2020, NHTSA released two reports related to COVID-19. The first was a synthesis of data on traffic safety during the second quarter (Q2) of the year, covering the months of April to June, providing context to understand changes in motor vehicle fatality rates in 2020. While traffic crash fatalities had declined in 2020, the fatality rate had increased. The second was an interim report on research examining the presence of drugs and alcohol in road users who were seriously and fatally injured in crashes; it noted increased prevalence of alcohol and some other drugs among these individuals. These reports provided context to data from NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) released at the same time. NCSA provided initial data on motor vehicle fatality numbers in 2020. In the first half of 2020, NCSA estimated that the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) had risen year-over-year, from a rate of 1.06 in 2019 to a projected rate of 1.25 in 2020 (NCSA, 2020). In that report, NCSA also reported a reduction in VMT of 26.4 billion miles—about a 16.6% decrease—in the first 6 months of 2020.

Given the importance of the findings across these reports, NHTSA immediately convened a series of workshops with national partners, State highway safety professionals, and researchers. In these meetings, NHTSA's Office of Behavioral Safety Research

1200 New Jersey Avenue

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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Research Note

DOT HS 813 210 Behavioral Safety Research October 2021

Continuation of Research on Traffic Safety During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency: January – June 2021

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration continues to explore traffic safety during the COVID-19 public health emergency. This work is crucial to further understanding changes in dangerous driving behaviors and letting us expand or evolve countermeasures to meet current needs in States and across the country. This Research Note updates traffic safety behavioral research findings during the COVID-19 public health emergency through the first half of the 2021 calendar year.

To date, NHTSA has released three reports synthesizing traffic safety data in 2020. NHTSA also released an interim report on research examining the presence of drugs and alcohol in road users who were seriously and fatally injured in crashes, which noted increased prevalence of alcohol and some other drugs among these individuals. These reports provided context to preliminary 2020 data that showed increases in the number and rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (National Center for Statistics and Analysis, 2021a). Given the importance of these findings, NHTSA immediately convened workshops and meetings with national partners, State highway safety professionals, and researchers. In these meetings, NHTSA led conversation on how to address these increases in traffic fatalities, especially focusing on risky driving behaviors. NHTSA continued to collect and synthesize data. New findings are described below. Data limitations identified in the earlier reports also apply to the data reported here.

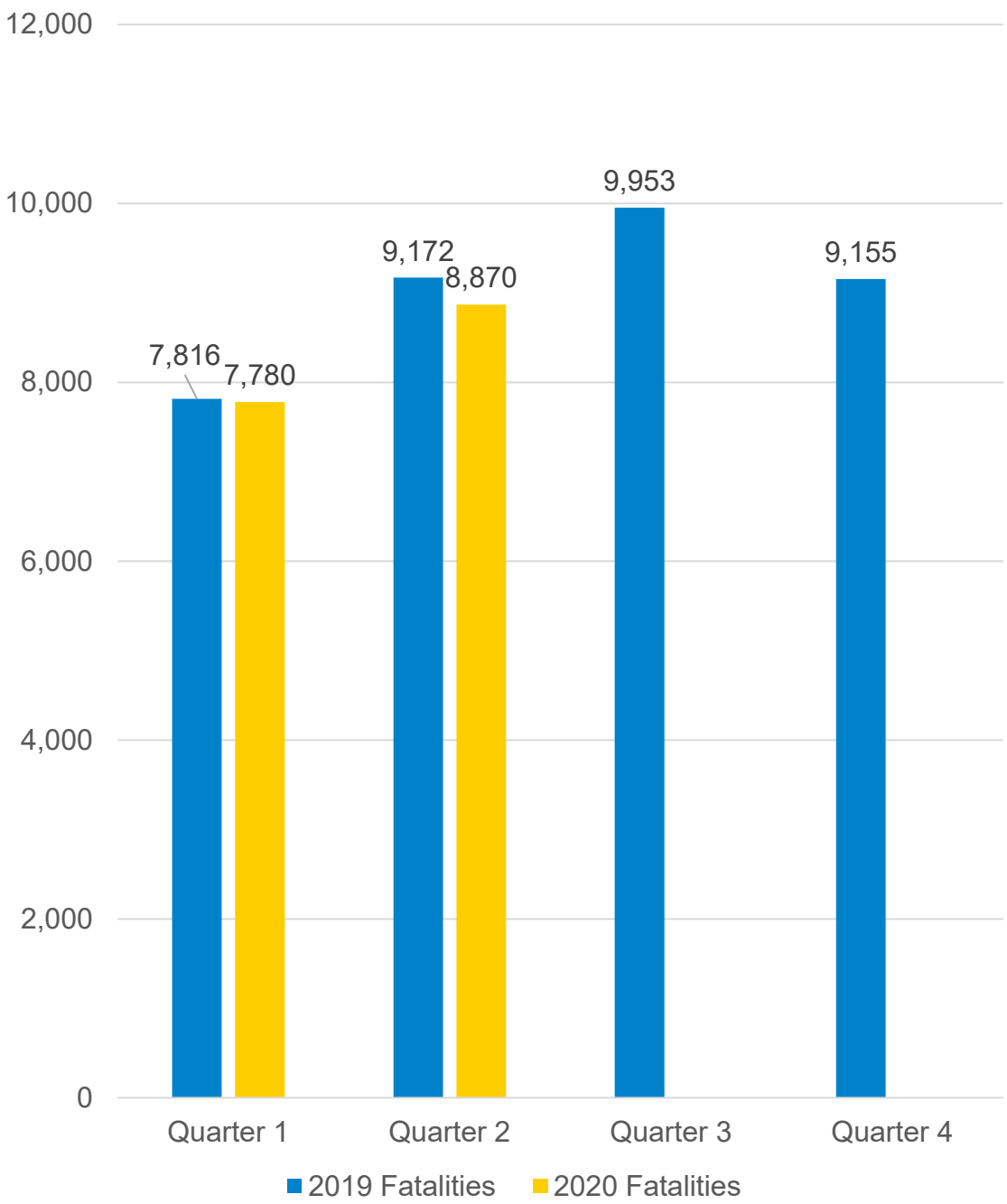
Background

After the declaration of the public health emergency in March 2020, driving patterns and behaviors in the United States changed significantly (Wagner et al., 2020; Office of Behavioral Safety Research, 2021a, 2021b). Of the drivers who remained on the roads, some engaged in riskier behavior, including speeding, failure to wear seat belts, and driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Traffic data cited in these reports showed average speeds increased during the last three quarters of 2020, and extreme speeds, those 20 miles per hour (or more) higher than the posted speed limit, became more common. These findings were supported by analyses of data from fatal crashes that show an estimated 11% increase in speeding-related fatalities (NCSA, 2021b). Other data suggested fewer people in crashes used their seat belts. Earlier research reports showed changes in the prevalence of alcohol and other drugs during the pandemic among seriously or fatally injured road users at different phases of the pandemic (Thomas et al., 2020; Office of Behavioral Safety Research, 2021a, 2021b). For example, the Thomas group found that almost two-thirds of the seriously or fatally injured drivers in their study tested positive for at least one active drug, including alcohol, marijuana, or opioids between mid-March and mid-July 2020. They also reported the proportion of drivers testing positive for opioids nearly doubled after mid-March 2020, compared to the previous 6 months, while marijuana prevalence increased by about 50%.

This Research Note includes analyses from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) and the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) National Performance Management Research Dataset (NPMRDs). These sources use telematic data that captures large volumes of information but does not permit analysis of individual performance. To address this limitation, researchers sought other data sources through traditional literature as well as "gray literature" such as blog posts to identify potential emerging behavioral safety trends that occurred during the public health emergency. They identified research reports documenting changes in distracted driving and other risky driving behaviors,

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Fatalities by Quarter, 2019 & 2020



Foundation in Data

The number of fatalities in Q1 and Q2 was lower in 2020 than in the previous year. This is unequivocally good.

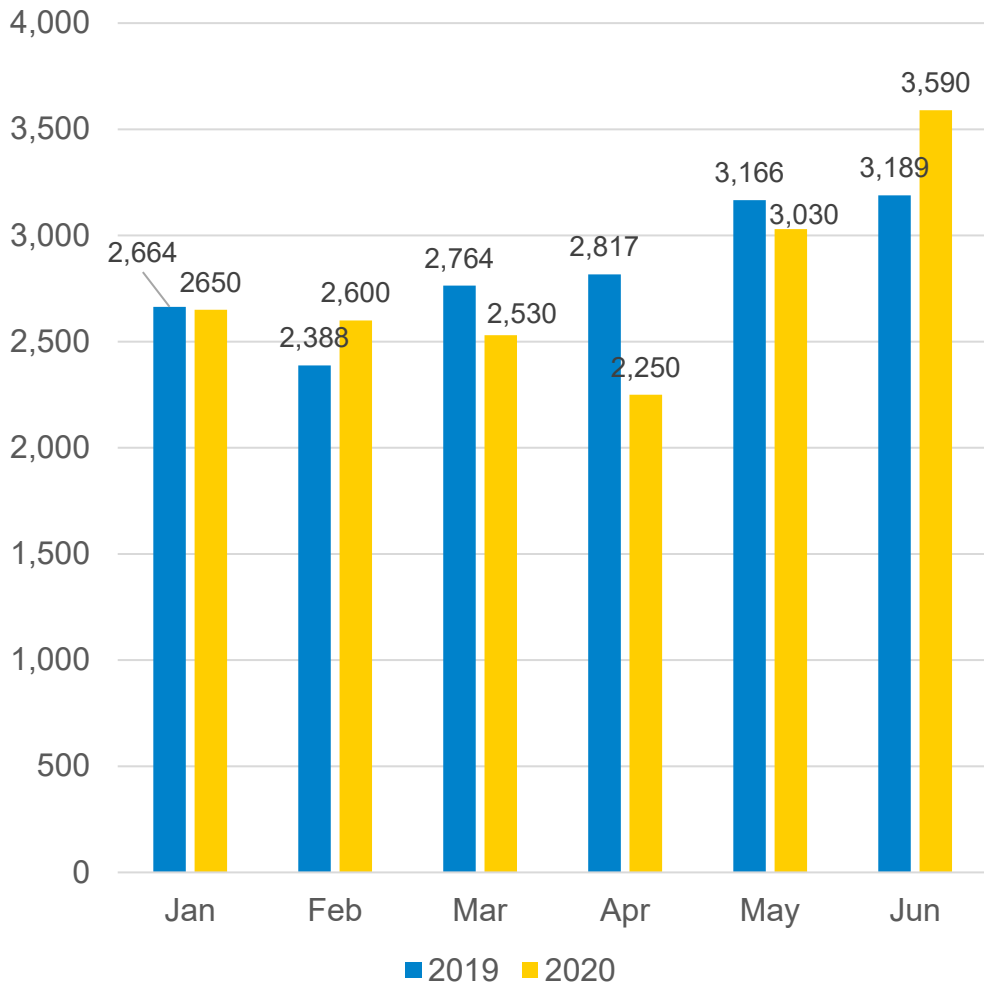
However, the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) increased substantially.

	Q1	Q2
2019	1.05	1.08
2020	1.10	1.42

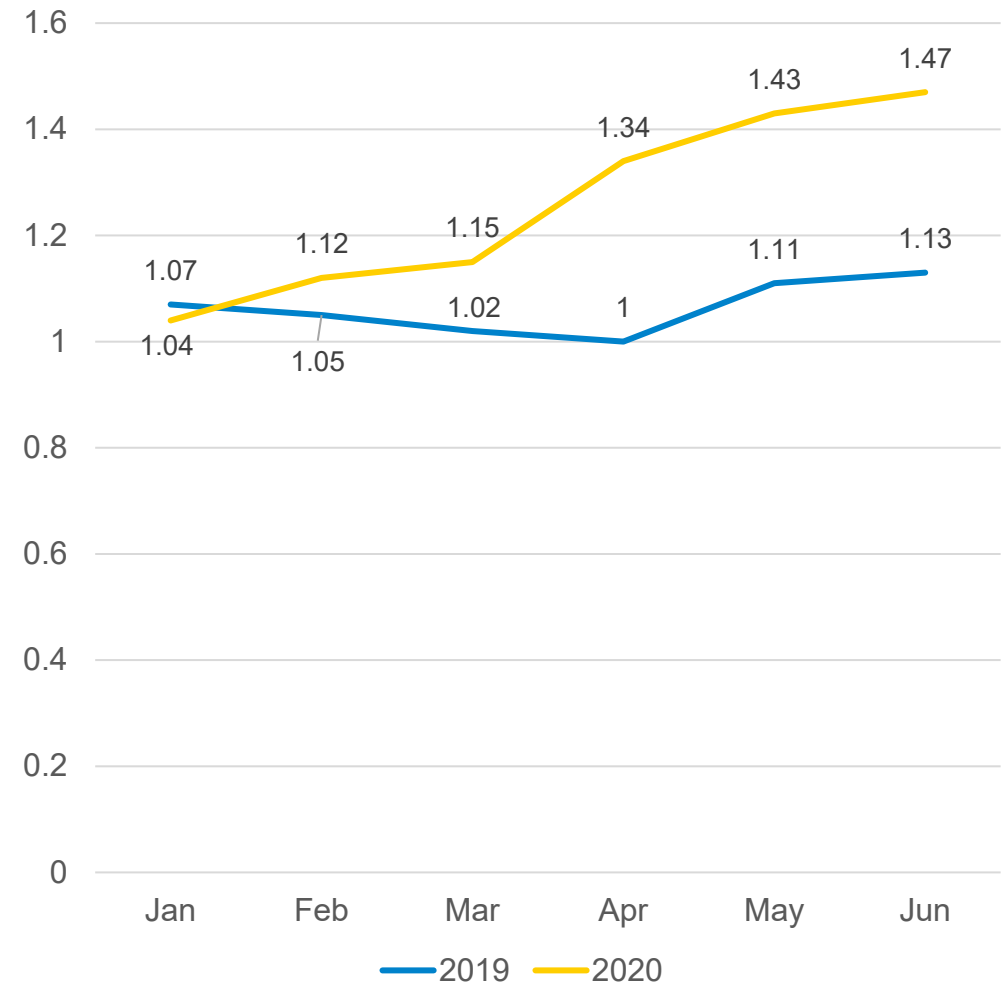
We need to understand why.

Source: Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities for the First Half (Jan–Jun) of 2020





















Fatalities by Month (Jan-Jun), 2019 & 2020



Fatality Rate Per 100M VMT by Month (Jan-Jun), 2019 & 2020



Synthesis - Historical Context

	VMT	Unemployment	Alcohol/Other Risks	Fatalities
“Normal” Recession				
Q2 2020				
Q3 2020				
Q4 2020				
1 st Half 2021				

Enforcement Changed

- **More than 900 first responders have died from COVID-19 through October 21, 2021**
 - **Law Enforcement comprise two-thirds of first responder fatalities**
- Through at least May, many law enforcement agencies had policies limiting interactions with the public and arrests
 - Reductions in stops, DWI arrests, speeding citations, belt citations
 - Deterrence through highly visible enforcement was not there
- In conversations with our Regions, States described reductions in traffic safety enforcement activity

Risky Behavior – Known and Seen

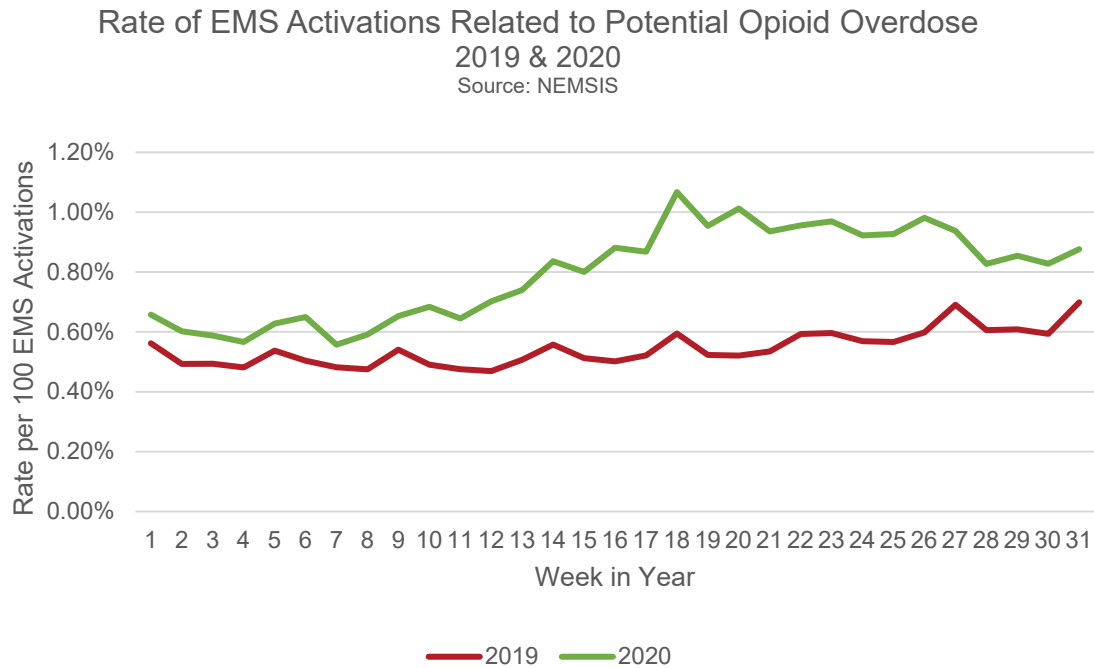
Speed – driving speeds increased

Seatbelts – ejection rates increased

Drugs and Alcohol -

- **Increase in opioid-related EMS calls** and Naloxone administration – more pronounced in urban areas
- **Increase in marijuana sales (taxes), alcohol sales**, reported self-medication
- **Increase in prevalence of drugs and alcohol** among critically injured road users at five trauma centers

Documented Increases in Drug and Alcohol Use



- Wholesale and retail sales of alcohol were at record levels in May and June
- States that reported their marijuana sales revenues showed dramatic increases throughout the quarter
- Significant increases in EMS calls related to opioid overdoses
- Surveys showed self-reported increases in drug and alcohol use

Alcohol & Other Drugs Seen in Trauma Patients Increased

- Proportion of **drivers** who were Motor Vehicle Crash trauma patients with **alcohol**, **marijuana** and **opiates** on board compared to pre-March 16 is up

Drug	Before March 16 (dating to Sept 2019)	After March 16
Alcohol	21.8%	28.3%
Cannabinoids (THC)	20.8%	32.7%
Opioids	7.5%	13.9%

- Highest BAC ranges showed biggest increases
- Antidepressants down

Note: All data presented on this slide is significant at the .05 level



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Program Update

Ignition Interlock Devices

- **Association of Ignition Interlock Program Administrators**
- **Traffic Injury Research Foundation**



← DRUNK DRIVING

Alcohol Measurement Devices

And Calibration Units

Share:

MODEL SPECIFICATIONS

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in its effort to reduce alcohol impaired driving, has established Model Specifications for the following alcohol testing devices:

- [Evidential Breath Alcohol Measurement Devices \(EBTs\)](#)
- [Screening Devices to Measure Alcohol in Bodily Fluids \(ASDs\)](#)
- [Calibrating Units for Breath Alcohol Testers \(CUs\)](#)
- [Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices \(BAIIDs\) 2013 | 2015](#)

CONFORMING PRODUCTS LISTS

NHTSA also maintains a Conforming Products List (CPL) for the following devices, which have been tested and determined to be in conformance with the NHTSA Model Specifications:

- [Evidential Breath Alcohol Measurement Devices \(EBTs\) 2012 | 2017](#)
- [Screening Devices to Measure Alcohol in Bodily Fluids \(ASDs\)](#)
- [Calibrating Units for Breath Alcohol Testers \(CUs\)](#)

www.NHTSA.gov/DUIDtool

The screenshot shows the NHTSA website header with the United States Department of Transportation logo and a search bar. The NHTSA logo is prominently displayed on the left. Navigation links for Ratings, Recalls, Risky Driving, Road Safety, and Equipment are on the right. The main content area features a dark blue background with a geometric pattern and the title "Drug-Impaired Driving Criminal Justice Evaluation Tool" in large white text. Below the title are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Email. A paragraph of text describes the tool's purpose and development process.

United States Department of Transportation

Search

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Ratings Recalls Risky Driving Road Safety Equipment

Drug-Impaired Driving Criminal Justice Evaluation Tool

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The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is engaged in numerous activities to reduce drug-impaired driving, including conducting research and developing tools, resources, and promising practices to assist states and local communities. To aid in evaluating efforts to address drug-impaired driving, NHTSA has developed the Drug-Impaired Driving Criminal Justice Evaluation Tool. The tool is designed to assist with identifying program strengths and opportunities for improvements. After asking two organizations to test the model to explore weaknesses and identify areas for refinement, NHTSA now wishes to learn from other practitioners what improvements and refinements could add value to the tool.

Law Enforcement Tools and Resources



Participant Manual

DWI Detection and Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST)




NHTSA
TSI
Transportation Safety Institute

LAW ENFORCEMENT PHLEBOTOMY TOOLKIT:
A Guide to Assist Law Enforcement Agencies With Planning and Implementing a Phlebotomy Program




U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration




March 2019



IF YOU FEEL DIFFERENT
YOU DRIVE DIFFERENT
DRIVE HIGH GET A DUI



 [WATCH NOW](#)



New Rulemaking/Report

- Advanced impaired driving technology
 - Passively monitor performance, or
 - Passively monitor BAC, or both
 - Within 3 years or extend 3 more. Report if not in 10 years
- GAO report on impaired driving arrest and citation data and sharing of conviction and license suspension data

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

Toxicology

- **State Toxicology Stakeholder Meetings**
- **Regional Toxicology Liaison Program**



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- Regional Toxicology Liaisons -
Judicial Outreach Liaisons
Law Enforcement Liaisons



Regional Toxicology Liaisons Project

NHTSA Regions:

5 - Chicago, IL

7 - Kansas City, MO

9 - Sacramento, CA

The Problem:

- Ever changing landscape of drugs makes it difficult for toxicology laboratories to test for all the drugs that may be present
 - Laboratories generally cover the routine drugs (THC, Methamphetamine, benzodiazepines, opioids)
 - Some novel or short-lived drugs may not be detected
- Laboratories have different capabilities
 - Instrumentation, staffing, method validations, etc.



A path to solutions:

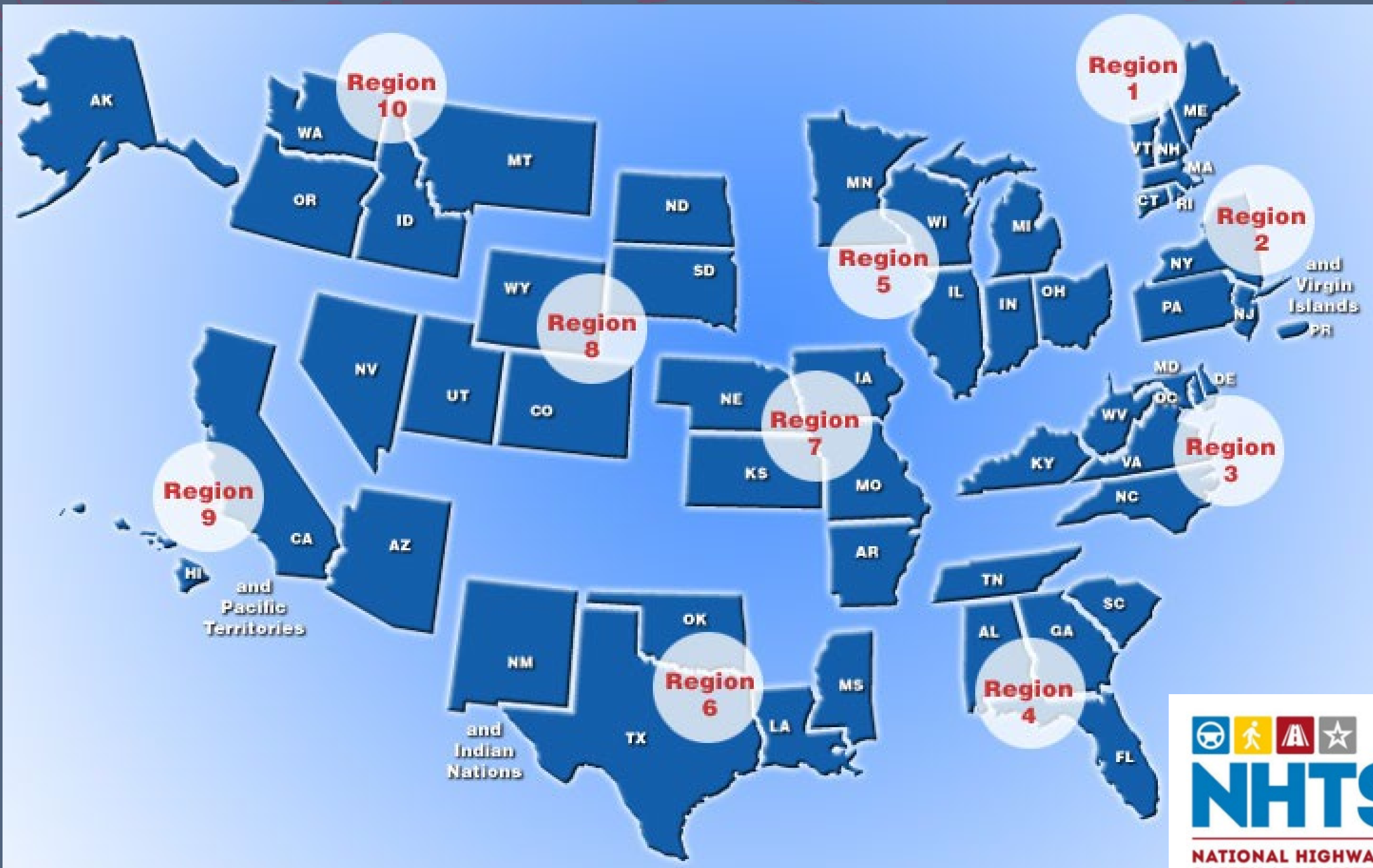
- Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT) awarded the Regional Toxicology Liaison (RTL) Project grant by NHTSA
- Cooperative agreement aims to benefit toxicology programs
 - Increased support/identify issues
 - Communications
 - Resources
 - Criminal Justice system coordination
 - Improved data reporting



The RTL Project



- The project incorporated a Project Coordinator and three Toxicology Liaisons that support states in NHTSA regions 5, 7, and 9
- Assist laboratories with training, collaboration, standardization of testing across state laboratories, and the reporting of data to better understand the scope of the drug-impaired driving problem.



Amy Miles - Project Coordinator



Sabra Jones - Region 5 Liaison



Chris Heartsill - Region 7 Liaison



Kristen Burke - Region 9 Liaison





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Regional Toxicology Liaisons
- Judicial Outreach Liaisons -
Law Enforcement Liaisons

National Fellows

- Cooperative Agreement with the American Bar Association
- National Judicial Fellow Judge Neil Axel, Senior Judge, MD
- Tribal Fellow- Judge Matt Martin, Senior Judge, NC

Regional JOLs

Region 1 (ME, MA, NH, VT, RI) TBD	Region 2 (CT, NJ, NY, PA, PR, Virgin Islands) TBD
Region 3 (MD, DE, DC, VA, WV, KY, NC) Hon. A. Robinson Hassell	Region 4 (TN, AL, GA, SC, FL) Hon. Ronald Ramsey
Region 5 (MN, WI, IL, IN, OH, MI) Hon. Karen Khalil	Region 6 (TX, OK, LA, MI, NM, Native Nations) Hon. Robert S. Anchondo
Region 7 (AR, IA, KS, MO, NE) Hon. Alan Blankenship	Region 8 (NV, UT, CO, WY, ND, SD) Hon. Scott Pearson
Region 9 (CA, HI, AZ, Pacific Territories) Hon. Richard Vlavianos	Region 10 (AK, WA, OR, ID, MT) Hon. Mary Jane Knisely

State JOLs

- Current State JOLs are contracted through SHSOs, Educational Institutions, Judicial entities
- State JOLs-CA, IN, KY, LA, MD, MI, MN, MO, NV, NM, NY, ND, OR, OH, OK, PA, SC, TN, TX, UT, and VA

Best Practices Guide Updated 2019

jols_032519_v10-withblanks-tag.pdf

Best Practices for Implementing A State Judicial Outreach Liaison Program

Revised March 2019



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration

 NHTSA

Best Practices Guide for
Implementing a State
JOL Program:

https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/14161-bestpracticesforsjols_032519_v10-withblanks-tag.pdf





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Regional Toxicology Liaisons
Judicial Outreach Liaisons
- Law Enforcement Liaisons -

Who Are LEL's

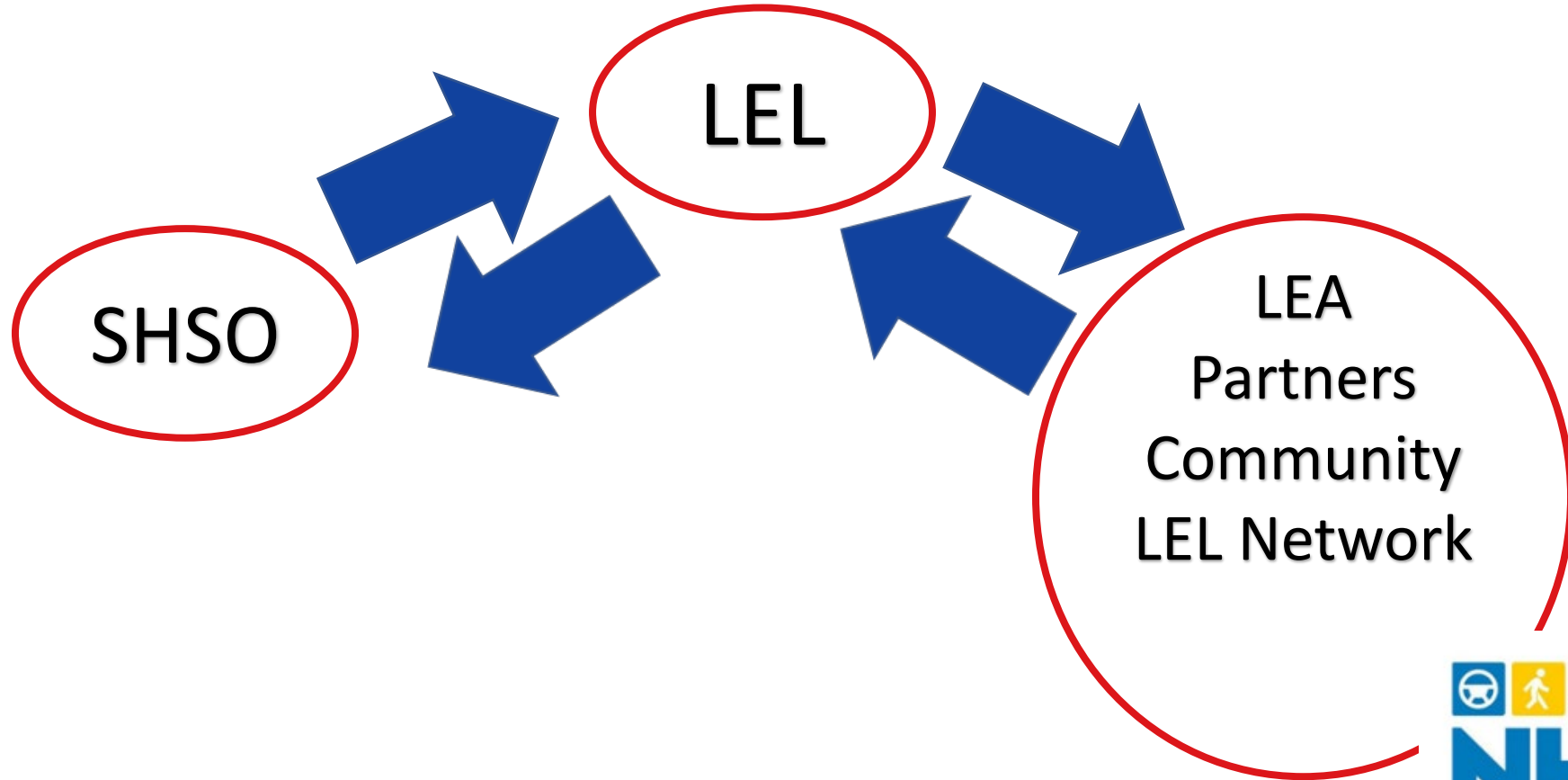
Colonel
Part-time Commander
Corrections Officer Captain
SME Traffic Staff Specialist
Full-time Public Contractor
Health Deputy Patrol
Retired Parole
Law Enforcement
Trooper

*** Behavior Change
Specialists**

*** Problem
Solvers**

*** Cheerleaders**

What LEL's Do





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Questions?

Thank you!