



Texas Traffic Safety Report



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Texas Traffic Safety Section

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PROPOSED NHTSA BUDGET CUT NEARLY IN HALF 48 PERCENT REDUCTION SOUGHT

The Reagan Administration has announced it will seek a 48 percent reduction in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) 1982 budget (starting Oct. 1, 1981). The revised budget would cut the agency's current operating level of \$325 million down to \$170 million, should Congress go along with the administration's proposal. Under the Carter Administration, \$357 million had been sought for next year's budget.

The majority of the cuts are proposed for the agency's Section 402 and 403 safety grant programs for state and local governments, as previously announced in February. Those programs are slated to be reduced by a total of \$168 million. The agency's operations and research budget will be sliced by \$19 million.

The agency also is expected to lose nearly a quarter of its work force between now and the end of fiscal 1982.

Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis said the cuts would come from the following program areas:

- \$19 million from operations and research, with \$17 million to be sliced from fuel economy, safety research and demonstration, and the data collection program. The re-

maining \$2 million reduction would be derived from employee and travel cut-backs.

- \$40 million earmarked for enforcement of the 55 mph speed limit.

- \$10 million from "transportation systems management" program grants jointly managed by NHTSA, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Urban Mass Transit Administration. Those funds had been designated for fuel conservation and clean air enforcement assistance to state and local

governments.

- \$4 million from driver licensing programs and \$10 million in driver education assistance. Those two areas are the responsibility of state and local governments, Lewis said.

- \$12 million from emergency medical services through the elimination of funds designated for the purchase of ambulances. Training funds for EMS crews still will be available, Lewis said.

- \$17 million in field office reductions.

- The remainder represents funds that had been authorized for expenditure but not yet designated, Lewis said.

According to NHTSA officials, there will be a 22 percent staff reduction of 151 positions between now and the end of fiscal 1982. About 40 staff positions will be eliminated by the end of this fiscal year, with the remainder falling to the budget ax by October 1982.

The agency expects to retain police training and alcohol safety programs, along with traffic records assistance for state and local governments, Lewis said.

Reprinted from *Status Report*



STATEWIDE DWI EDUCATION PROGRAM ESTABLISHED

(AUSTIN) A contract to establish a statewide traffic safety education program for persons convicted of driving while intoxicated has been awarded to the Texas Commission on Alcoholism (TCA).

"Both this Department and the Commission on Alcoholism are very optimistic about the potential impact of this program," said Anna

Isbell, DWI education project manager for the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation. "We expect to see a drop in the number of people who are repeatedly arrested and convicted of driving while intoxicated because of the information they will receive in the classes. An additional benefit will result due to the number

of people who will be referred to some type of treatment because of the screening involved in the classes. This will ultimately reduce the number of drinking and drunk drivers on the highways," said Isbell.

The project's purpose is to standardize and upgrade existing DWI educational programs and establish new ones, with the eventual goal

of DWI programs in each county. In Florida and Arkansas where similar standardized programs exist, recidivism rates of DWI offenders have significantly decreased.

The one-year contract is funded by the State Department of Highways and Public

(Continued on page 4)

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UT Presents Papers At TRB

(AUSTIN) Ten research papers prepared by the Center for Transportation Research at The University of Texas at Austin were presented at the recent annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board in Washington, D.C.

The board is a member of the National Research Council which is part of the National Academy of Sciences.

More than 900 papers and presentations were given by researchers from throughout the United States.

Dr. B. Frank McCullough, director of the UT Center for Transportation Research, presided at a session on maintenance and rehabilitation of rigid pavements, and Dr. W. Ronald Hudson, professor of civil engineering, was in charge of a meeting on road roughness.

The UT presentations covered such topics as:

- Transportation services for the elderly and the handicapped.
- Changes in the weight limits for vehicles on highways.
- Weigh-in-motion stations for trucks.
- Increases in size and weights of trucks on rural highways.
- Asphalt mixtures.

(Continued on page 4)

INCREASED MOTORCYCLIST DEATHS ATTRIBUTED TO HELMET LAW REPEAL

(DALLAS) Lying in a hospital bed, his leg in a heavy cast, John Burt, 25 considers himself lucky to be alive. He was not wearing a helmet when he and his friends were hit by a car near Irving Boulevard as they were leaving work on a motorcycle. Others have not been as fortunate as Burt.

Since August 1977, when Texas repealed the law requiring motorcyclists to wear helmets, the motorcycle fatality toll has jumped more than 70 percent, the Department of Public Safety says.

"The revised statute has contributed to a record high jump in the number of cyclists killed since 1976, the last full year that cyclists were required to wear helmets," said Joe Rich, a safety education trooper in the DPS substation in Garland. DPS statistics show 186 cyclists were killed in Texas in 1976. Last year, the figure jumped to 367, Rich said.

Two hundred seventy-two riders, 74 percent of the 367 victims, were not wearing helmets, and neither were 6,178, or 56 percent, of the 11,074 motorcyclists injured last year, Rich said.

The number of deaths dropped 55 percent during

the first eight years the helmet law was in effect. After the repeal, the number of persons riding without helmets jumped almost 47 percent, a 1978 Texas A&M University study says.

The study, "Evaluation of Motorcycle Safety Helmet Usage Law," was sponsored by the Traffic Safety Section, State Department of Highways and Public Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The helmet law was in force for almost 10 years. Opponents of the law convinced Congress the statute violated freedom of choice. Some critics also argued helmets obstructed their vision and contributed to back injuries, although proponents of the law reject the contention.

Dr. Myron Koehler, a former professor and motorcycle instructor, compiled the 27-page A&M University study in 13 months.

He said the report shows cyclists failing to wear

helmets have a 55 percent greater chance of being severely injured than other riders.

The study also concluded the risk of being killed is 2½ times greater for cyclists not wearing helmets than for others.

"That's a pretty high probability," Koehler said.



The A&M study included investigations of 1,150 accidents in Dallas County before the helmet law was repealed and another 1,227 after the repeal.

Federal and state safety officials are using the studies in efforts to get the mandatory helmet law re-enacted in some states and retained in others.

Twenty-two states, including Texas, repealed the law before the A&M study was done, Koehler said.

Texas law requires only people younger than 18 to wear a helmet while riding a motorcycle. Youths 15 to 18 also must take an instructional course before they get an operator's license.

The most recent attempt to revive the mandatory helmet law in Texas failed during the 1979 Legislature, despite contentions by lobbyists that Texas is second behind California in the number of registered motorcycles.

The Motorcycle Industry Council, Inc., reported 8 million cycles were in use by 20 million people in the United States in 1978, Koehler said.

In September 1980, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued what safety enthusiasts say is the most comprehensive study so far.

The 75-page report, "Summary of Results: Motorcycle Accident Factors Study,"

culminated a 2-year investigation of 900 motorcycle accidents in Los Angeles.

The study showed 78 percent of the riders killed were not wearing helmets, said Dr. Patrick M. Sutherland, an NHTSA spokesman in Austin.

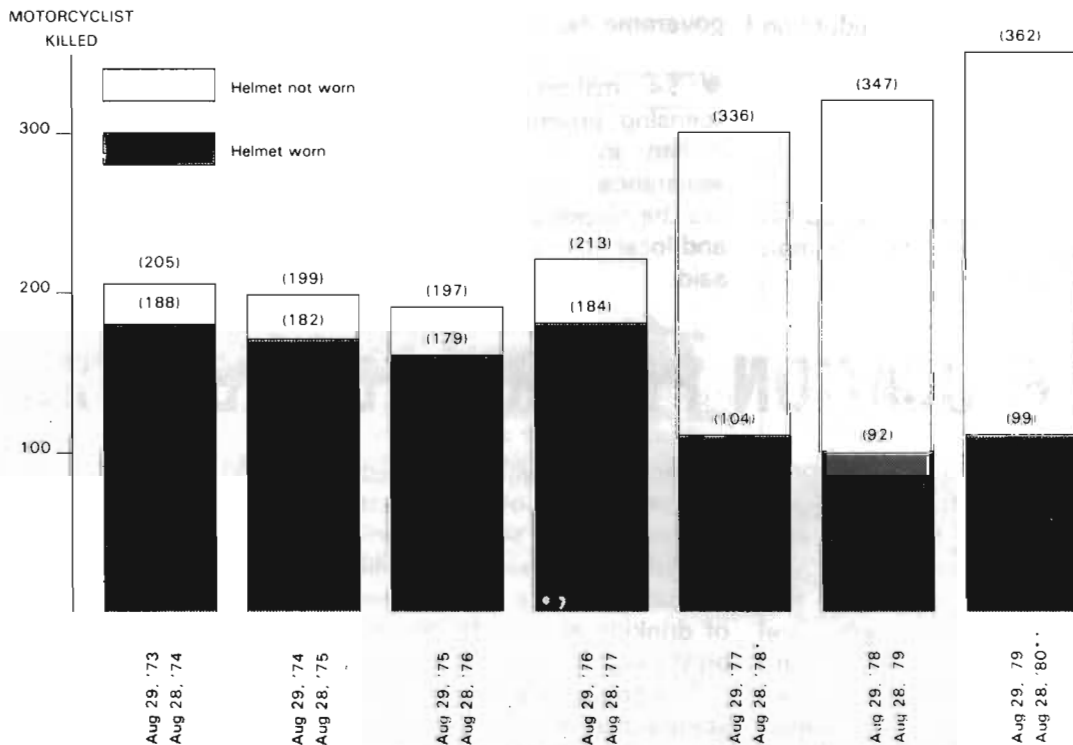
"Riding without a helmet is just asking for suicide," Sutherland said.

"When you take a person who's been maimed to such a degree that society has to support him, I don't see that he ought to have a freedom of choice," Koehler said. "Legislation ought to be able to say, You need to wear a helmet."

Reprinted with permission from the Dallas Morning News. Prepared by Staff Writer Norma A. Wade.

DPS Traffic Accident Report	
as of Friday, March 27 1981	
Accidents	Deaths
714	814
as of Friday, Mar 28 1980	
Accidents	Deaths
693	796

HELMET USE BY MOTORCYCLISTS KILLED



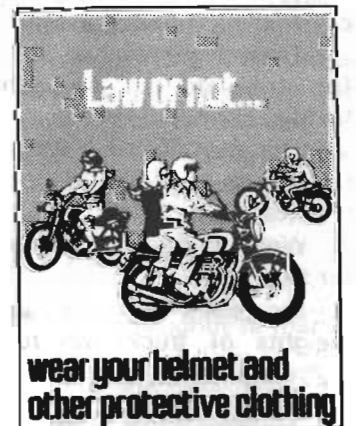
* State law governing the use of motorcycle helmets was revised effective 8-29-77 to permit motorcycle operators and passengers age 18 or over to ride without wearing protective headgear.
** 1980 data is preliminary and is subject to change.

SURVEY FINDS MOTORCYCLIST USE MORE HOSPITAL SERVICES

Motorcyclists involved in crashes required more hospital care per person than any other major group of injured patients, researchers reported in a study of the use of resources at a British hospital.

The study, published in the November 1980 issue of THE JOURNAL OF TRAUMA, analyzed the resource requirements of 200 patients admitted to the accident unit at the British Royal Infirmary in 1976 in Bristol, England. Resource use was assessed for 12 categories of injured patients. The resources considered were X-rays,

laboratory services, operating facilities, and nursing and institutional care - defined as "all aspects of nursing, technical, administrative, ancillary, and medical care."



PUBLIC AND MEDIA CONFUSED BY EMOTIONAL, UNINFORMED VOICES

The failure of informed persons to speak out publicly about solutions to the drunk driving problem has left the readers and watchers of mass media with the mistaken idea that "getting serious" about the problem means "getting tough," according to a representative of the nation's distillers.

Paul F. Gavaghan, DISCUS vice president, spoke at the Alliance for Traffic Safety's winter meeting during the National Safety Congress, responding to the theme: "What Does Traffic Safety Need in the Eighties?"

The DISCUS executive observed: "We have a new generation coming along who may try to re-invent the wheel and revert to the primitive approach taken before 1970 — thus jettisoning a wealth of experience and research.

"We're hearing some new voices lately who see the drunk driver as a menace who must be gotten off the road and into jail. This is their total solution to the problem. That's all they think we have to do, spiced with some new scare advertising, threatening billboards, and publicity warnings. In other words, they feel let's just get tough again and we'll crack this problem real quick.

"This clashes head-on with the hard-won perspective that (1) we are dealing actually with at least four DWI populations, (2) each of whom require distinctly tailored remedial programs. These populations include the alcoholic, the problem drinker, the social drinker who overimbides on occasion, and the inexperienced drinker/driver.

"Those who know," Gavaghan stressed, "have an obligation not to yield public forums to emotionally charged but uninformed voices."

He recognized the growing level of public interest in redoubled efforts to reduce drunk driving and said that "it is our obligation and opportunity to see to it that this emotion and energy are channelled into constructive programs rather than a return to primitive 'cure-alls.'"

In reponse to growing

concern in the traffic safety field that the system may be experiencing a breakdown, Gavaghan said the problem may possibly be elsewhere. Instead of a breakdown in the traffic safety system, the problem may be in the coordination of the health system. He asked: "How do we know repeat offenders are being properly screened? How do we know treatment and counseling service providers are qualified? Are we simply

feeding multiple violators back into the traffic mainstream?"

He said that DWI re-education for one-time offenders has emphasized the effects of alcohol abuse, rather than the responsible drinking model. "A serious doubt has been raised about the effectiveness of such reeducation courses," Gavaghan said.

Reprinted from DISCUS

67TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION PROPOSED TRAFFIC SAFETY LEGISLATION

Alcohol

HB 1644 *Relating to the Effect of a Conviction for DWI*
Provides for suspension of Driver's License for up to 1 year upon conviction of DWI.

HB 1501 *Relating to Chemical Tests for Intoxication*
Expands the offense of DWI to include public beaches; deletes reference to a chemical breath test, substitutes "the taking of a specimen of his breath, blood, urine, or other bodily substances"; deletes reference to law enforcement officers, substitutes "peace" officer; and allows for the testing of the dead or unconscious for statistical purposes.

SB 798 *Relating to the Punishment for the Offense of DWI*
Increases the maximum fine from \$500 to \$2000.

HB 1456 *Relating to the Effect of a Conviction for DWI*
Provides for probation with a fine and allows (not requires) the court to refer the offender to a defensive driving course.

HB 747 *Relating to the Requirement of a Breath Test for a Person Arrested for DWI*
Removes the "implied consent" provision.

HB 359 *Rehabilitation Programs as a Condition of Probation for Persons Convicted of Driving While Intoxicated*
Mandatory DWI Education and automatic suspension of driver's license for persons convicted of DWI.

HB 453 *Effect of Driver's Refusal to Take a Chemical Breath Test for Intoxication*
Automatic suspension of driver's license upon refusal to take the chemical breath test.

SB 83 *Rehabilitation Programs as a Condition for Probation for Persons Convicted of Driving While Intoxicated*
Mandatory DWI Education but no driver's license suspension.

SB 368 *Rehabilitation Programs as a Condition of Probation for Persons Convicted of Driving*



TEXAS CITY -- College of the Mainland is currently developing a curriculum and visual aides to use in the new Safety Town being erected on the campus. The Safety Town will serve the community's students in kindergarten through fourth grades.

DENTON --North Texas State University has received funding through SDHPT to continue its training program for health care professionals. The purpose of the training is to inform professionals of the importance of child safety seat usage.

BRAZOS COUNTY --The County is conducting a sign replacement program through the help of SDHPT. This will bring all warning signs and object markers in compliance with the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

While Intoxicated
Same as HB 359.

HB 713 *Elements of Punishment for Subsequent Offense of DWI*
Includes previous felony, as well as misdemeanor, DWI convictions in punishment.

Motorcycles

HB 1336 *Relating to Requirements that Persons 18 and over Wear Protective Headgear When Operating a Motorcycle*
Operator and Passenger required to use motorcycle helmets.

HB 949 Same as HB 1336

SB 39 *Relating to Statements Regarding Motorcycle Helmets*
People applying for motorcycle titles must sign a statement saying they are aware of the danger of riding a motorcycle without a helmet.

Hazardous Materials

HB 860 *Relating to Transportation of Hazardous Materials*
Requires the transporter to file information with DPS prior to the transportation, including route, type of cargo, type of hazard, etc. DPS is authorized to develop rules for transportation.

Speed

SCR 38 *Memorializing Congress to Repeal the 55 MPH Speed Limit*

HB 1173 *Relating to Temporary Speed Limits on Highways*
Repeals the 55 mph speed limit.

Driving Safety

HB 758 *Relating to a Driving Safety Course as an Alternative to Prosecution for Certain Traffic*

(Continued on page 4)

Proposed Legislation, Cont. From 3

Offenses

Slight variation of SB 155.

SB 155

Relating to Driving Safety Course as an Alternative to Prosecution for Certain Traffic Offenses

Adjudication deferred 90 days to let defendant attend a driving safety course; charges are dropped if he successfully completes the course.

Child Passenger Safety

SB 770

Relating to Child Passenger Restraint Systems

Provides for mandatory use of child restraints for children under the age of 5 if transported by parent or legal guardian in a car or light truck. The fine can be waived if the offender shows proof of purchase of a child restraint device within 10 days after the date of the offense.

HB 1502

Same as SB 770.

Quiz Yourself

- Blinking red lights at a railroad crossing are a warning to:
 - Stop; cross only when it is safe
 - Slow to 15 MPH.
 - Stop until the lights go out.
- You are stalled on a track. A train is coming. You should
 - Leave the vehicle; move away from the track.
 - Keep trying to restart the vehicle.
 - Get out and push.
- Before it can stop, a train might travel as much as:
 - 100 yards.
 - A half-mile.
 - A mile-and-a-half.
- In a train/vehicle collision, your chance of being killed is:
 - Twice as great as in other highway accidents.
 - 14 times greater.
 - Almost the same.

ANSWERS 1a, 2a, 3c, 4b.

Provided by the National Safety Council



This newsletter is an official publication of the Traffic Safety Section of the Safety and Maintenance Operations Division—and is intended to inform the public on the traffic safety programs in Texas. Contributing articles from outside sources are the reflected opinions of the author and not necessarily those of the Traffic Safety Section. Permission is granted for reproduction of articles or photographs, except where the publication has obtained permission from other sources and provided credit. The Texas Traffic Safety Report is published monthly. Comments or contributions should be sent to:



TEXAS TRAFFIC SAFETY REPORT
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Texas Meets 55 mph Compliance, Saves \$7 Million With New Formula

AUSTIN (AP) — A change in the way federal officials calculate compliance with the 55-mph speed limit has saved Texas \$7 million in federal money.

Under the new formula, which takes into account speedometer error, Texas meets the federal requirement of 40 percent compliance with speed limit.

"This gives us another year's grace," said Gene Sparks, assistant chief engineer of safety and maintenance operations.

State Department of Highways and Public Transportation officials got word of the new formula late in December from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Federal Highway Administration, Sparks said.

The new method for calculating compliance allows for a 5-mph error in speedometer readings.

Under the old formula, Texas had a 34 percent compliance rate—a figure that would have caused a 5 percent penalty in federal funds, or about \$7 million, Sparks said.

In 1981, at least 50 percent of Texas motorists must observe the national speed limit to avoid the penalty.

Texans largely have resisted the 55-mph national speed limit, despite pleas from state officials worried about the loss of federal funds.

In October, when the penalty seemed certain Department of Public Safety director Jim Adams said "a tremendous enforcement and education effort by DPS and other offices" had not led to the required compliance.

Adams said recently he was pleased the threat of the penalty had been dissolved.

"My feeling is anything that helps us avoid sanctions is good because we are vigorously enforcing the speed limit. We have shown great success in bringing the top speeds down," he said.

Only 10 percent of Texas motorists are exceeding 65 mph, he said.

NEWS

FROM

WASHINGTON

CHILD RESTRAINT SYSTEMS

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 213, Child Restraint Systems, which went into effect on January 1, 1981:

Covers all types of systems to restrain children in motor vehicles, such as infant carriers, child seats, harnesses and car beds.

Replaces the current static testing of child restraint systems with 20 and 30 mph dynamic testing that more closely represents car crashes.

Prohibits restraints from collapsing during dynamic tests.

Requires child restraints to retain a child test dummy within the confines of the restraint during dynamic testing.

Sets padding requirements for child restraints for use by children weighing 20 pounds or less (energy absorbing foam requirement for head area).

Limits the forces exerted on the head and chest of a child test dummy during dynamic testing of restraints for use by child weighing more than 20 pounds (instrumented dummy test).

Ensures that child restraints equipped with top tether straps or arm rests provide a minimum level of safety performance when the top tether is not used or the arm rest is in place but the child restraint systems belts are not buckled. (Armrest must function as a protective barrier.)

Specifies the amount of force needed to open buckles on child restraint belts so that young children cannot unbuckle themselves, but adults can easily open the buckle.

Requires warnings to encourage the proper use of the restraint to be permanently and visibly posted on the child restraint. The restraint must also have a location for storing an accompanying information booklet or sheet on how to correctly install and use the restraint.

DWI Education, Continued From 1

Transportation with funds granted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The Department anticipates this will be a three year program, but only one year's funding is available at

this time due to federal funding policy.

Curriculum for the program was developed by Sam Houston State University. The University will also provide the instructor training.

Papers, Continued From 1

--Precast repair of continuously reinforced concrete pavement.

--Training the retarded to use public transportation.

--Road roughness measurements.

--Highway pavement repairs using polymer concrete.