

CASE Newsletter

California Association for Safety Education Volume XXII, No. 2 - June 2012

State Updating Highway Plan

By Jerry Gaines, Past CASE President

California traffic safety officials are continuing to implement identified goals of the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Recent meetings I participated in focused on the status of previously agreed goals of SHSP Challenge Area 6 – Reduce Deaths of Teenaged Drivers.

Accomplishments of SHSP actions to date include the establishment of a task force to improve driver education and training, increased CHP Start Smart outreach and GDL enforcement, revised DMV Parent/Teen Handbook, initiated parent-teen contracts program, expanded Start Smart, Right Turn, Every 15 Minutes, TRACE, and FNL programs, modified DMV completion certificate to include modality of course taken (on-line vs. classroom, etc.), collaborated with Caltrans on Safe Routes to School program, establishment of a task force to collaborate with CHP and OTS to work with existing statewide media campaigns, and SHSP worked with ABC outreach associated with TRACE, Shoulder Tap, Minor Decoy, and Teen Party Prevention campaigns.

SHSP programs in progress include working with the DMV to re-implement Driver Performance Evaluation Testing to include freeway driving, and having the DMV implement a program with congratulatory letters every six months to holders of provisional licenses.

SHSP discussion items considered to date include having DMV licensing for GDL expand beyond teens 16 and 17 years old to address higher deaths and injuries in 18 and 19 year old drivers. More data is needed to pursue such an expansion. Also consideration should be given to developing programs in risk management training, parent participation, instructor training, expansion of behind-the-wheel instruction, improved insurance discounts, and developing a more standardized curriculum (i.e. new NHTSA standards).

The SHSP task force is currently revising its action plan for the coming decade. There is support for the task force to continue to work for some 15% reduction in annual teen deaths by 2020 from deaths noted in 2009 (over 380) in California. Meetings continue on a bi-monthly basis via teleconference or attendance at the Office of Traffic Safety in Sacramento.

Survey Shows What Riders and Drivers Think of Motorcycle “Lane Splitting”

The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) has released results of the first-ever survey of California motorists and motorcycle riders on the subject of “lane splitting,” where motorcycles travel between two lanes with other vehicles travelling the same direction. California is the only state to allow this common practice.

Lane splitting has been a subject for controversy and confusion for years. The OTS survey showed that only 53 percent of vehicle drivers knew that lane splitting is legal in California. Eighty-seven percent of motorcycle riders say they lane split, while seven percent of vehicle drivers admit to having attempted to prevent it.

The key to legal lane splitting for motorcycle riders is doing so in a safe and prudent manner, being cognizant of overall traffic speeds, speed differences, spacing and lane changing patterns of surrounding traffic. Riding too fast is one of the most common things that motorcyclists do to make lane splitting unsafe.



Motorists and other road users are reminded to safely “share the road” with motorcycles and to be extra alert to help keep motorcyclists safe. Changing the driving habits of motorists and motorcyclists alike will help decrease the numbers of motorcyclists killed and injured in crashes. Motorcyclists are reminded to make sure that they are visible to motorists, and that they follow the rules of the road.

The latest survey results will be incorporated into the California Strategic Highway Safety Plan to help develop additional strategies to reduce motorcycle fatalities and injuries. A motorcyclist is more vulnerable than a passenger vehicle occupant in the event of a crash. Research from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shows that per vehicle mile traveled, motorcyclists are about 39 times more likely than passenger car occupants to die in traffic crashes.

California Office of Traffic Safety, May 3, 2012

Nationwide Survey Finds Teens in Denial About Safety on the Road.

While America's young drivers are aware of what distracted driving is, they still engage in those behaviors because they believe they are not truly at risk, according to a new nationwide survey commissioned by Bridgestone Americas, Inc.

The tire manufacturer surveyed more than 2,000 drivers ages 15-21. While more than half of the respondents said they believed distracted driving was dangerous, they either don't think they themselves get distracted behind the wheel, or they believe they take extra precautions to avoid distractions while driving.

"People often believe they drive safely and responsibly, especially our newest drivers, said Angela Patterson, Manager, Teens Drive Smart Program, Bridgestone Americas. "However, we need to reinforce that it only takes one time—one sip of coffee, one change of the radio station, one glimpse at the cell phone—to cause or be involved in a crash that could have dire consequences."

The survey also finds that while many teenagers and young adults claim they understand the dangers of texting and driving or drinking and driving, they don't see everything that takes one hand off the wheel as a distraction. They measure their level of safety as a driver by the fact that they haven't been in an accident or ticketed – yet.

Bridgestone surveyed more than 2,000 young drivers, ages 15-21, and found:

- One-third of those surveyed admit to reading text messages while driving;
- Two-thirds of respondents believe they are "very safe" drivers; but only half of them say their parents would agree with that assessment;
- A quarter of those surveyed do not believe that talking on the phone while driving is dangerous;
- Overall, girls engage in distractions behind the wheel far more than boys, and
- Teenagers and young adults say their parents engage in distracted driving more than themselves.



Outgoing President Shannon Woods (left) received praise at the Ontario CASE Conference for her four years of outstanding service from incoming President Barbara Shiffermiller.

MOTORCYCLE DATA

- In 1990, the average age for a motorcyclist fatality was 29.
- In 2007, the average age for a motorcyclist fatality was 41.
- California has seen the number of registered motorcycles double over the past 10 years to more than 1.2 million today.

TIPS FOR DRIVERS

- Perform a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or exiting a lane.
- Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic.
- Allow more following distance -- three or four seconds -- when behind a motorcycle so the motorcyclist has enough time to maneuver or stop.
- Never tailgate.

TIPS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS

- Avoid riding in poor weather.
- Wear brightly colored protective gear and a DOT-compliant helmet.
- Use turn signals for every turn or lane change.
- Combine hand and turn signals.

Source: Office of Traffic Safety

Teacher Preparation Courses

For information on Driver Education teacher prep courses in the Northern California and Riverside areas, contact Anna Maria Toma at UC Riverside School of Extended Education (951) 827-1661.

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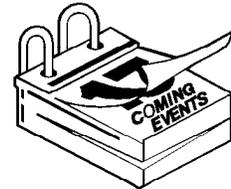
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Richard Mikulik, Editor

25 Shelbourne Place
San Mateo, CA 94402

E-mail: casemembership@sbcglobal.net

CASE Web Site: www.casewebsite.org



CASE Calendar

July 13-15, 2012 - NSSP Annual Teen Leadership Conference, Radisson Paper Valley Hotel, Appleton, Wisconsin. Contact: www.adtsea.org

July 15-18, 2012 - ADTSEA Conference, "Driver Education & Licensing: A Team Approach." Radisson Paper Valley Hotel, 333 W. College Avenue, Appleton, Wisconsin, 54911, (920) 733-8000. To register, contact: www.adtsea.org

August 5-11, 2012 - National Stop on Red Week. Contact: Federal Highway Administration @ <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/redlight/outreach>

August 17 - September 3, 2012- Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over. National Crackdown Contact: www.stopimpaireddriving.org

September 16-22, 2012 - National Child Passenger Safety Week. Contact: www.nhtsa.gov

CASE Mission Statement:

Promote traffic safety education in conjunction with all appropriate organizations in developing safe and efficient users of the highway transportation system.

60th Annual CASE Conference

Ontario Airport Sheraton Hotel, Ontario, California, March 17, 2012



Pre-conference CASE Board of Directors meeting. Clockwise from the left: Kevin Tucker, Larry Woodruff, Bill Lee, Barbara Shiffermiller, Shannon Woods, Jerry Gaines, Rich Mikulik, and Genny Claxton.



Jerry Gaines gave a presentation on “*The Past, Present, and Future of CASE*,” commemorating the organization’s 60th anniversary.



Paul Bartram presented “*Start Out Smart Driver Education*”



Officer Jeff Briggs discussed the CHP’s teen *Start Smart* driver education program.



This year’s Cecil Zaun Forum featured Driving School Association of California President Robert Stahl, Jerry Gaines, and Executive Director for *Impact Teen Drivers* Dr. Kelly Browning discussing upcoming changes in GDL laws.



Jim Lewis, Past CASE and ADTSEA President.



Paul Reynolds presented “*Classroom Simulation*”

New Studies Show Distracted Driving on Increase

Cell phone use up, especially among youth. College students think they can handle it.

The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) released in May the results of studies on distracted driving. The studies came on the heels of the second annual Distracted Driving Awareness Month, which saw hundreds of law enforcement agencies stepping up enforcement of the state's cell phone and texting while driving laws.

For the second year in a row, OTS commissioned an observational survey of cell phone use by drivers within the state, looking for hand-held and hands-free talking as well as texting and other use of mobile devices while driving. The overall rate was 10.8 percent of drivers on the road using cell phones at any given daylight time, up from 7.3 percent in 2011. Although observed cell phone use increases were seen across all age groups, 16 to 25 year olds showed a dramatic rise, doubling from 9 percent to 18 percent.

"These results are disturbing, but not entirely unforeseen," said OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy. "Now that smartphones are becoming the majority, people are using them more often and in many more ways. This might be helpful in a lot of places, but definitely not behind the wheel."

Researchers fanned out to more than 130 intersections in 17 counties to observe whether drivers had a phone to their ear, were wearing a Bluetooth or headset device, were manipulating a hand-held device, or were talking while holding a phone in their hand but not to their ear.

A similar nationwide survey conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 2010 showed the combined usage rate of 9.6 percent. OTS considers the latest results to be low-end indications of drivers engaged in these dangerous behaviors, since it's not always possible to tell in a short, limited view observation whether someone is using a phone, especially for texting or using apps. Possible explanations for the large increase in device use could be that more young people who tend to text more are now drivers, in addition to smartphones with handy "apps" becoming much more widespread.

In another study, researchers at the University of California, San Diego studied the prevalence and type of distracted driving behaviors in younger drivers. Researchers surveyed nearly 5,000 college and university students between the ages of 18 – 29, with an average age of 21 years in San Diego County. The results of the online survey were wide-ranging. Some of the highlights include:

- 78 percent reported using a cell phone while driving (talking or texting).
- 52 percent reported ever using hands-free cell phones, and only 25 percent used hands-free with high frequency.
- 50 percent said they send texts while driving on freeways, 60

percent in stop-and-go traffic or on city streets, and 87 percent at traffic lights. Texting is illegal whether moving or at a stop.

- 17.5 percent said they had been in a collision due to distracted driving. Of those crashes, 24 percent were due to reaching away, 24 percent talking to passenger, 22 percent texting, 16 percent working the radio or other audio player, and 14 percent talking on a cell phone.
- 66 percent considered themselves in the top 20 percent of driving skill, compared with other college students.
- 46 percent said they were capable or very capable of talking on a cell phone and driving, but they felt only 8.5 percent of others were.



"We know from other studies that a growing percentage of the population is getting the message that using cell phones is dangerous," said Murphy. "What this new information tells us is that too many are still convinced that a crash will never happen to them. We have to turn that thinking around or we will see tragic increases in fatal and injury crashes."

The California Strategic Highway Safety Plan, a collaboration of Federal, State, County and local governments, as well as numerous advocate groups, businesses, and community organizations, last year created a new "Challenge Area" specifically for distracted driving, with an emphasis on cell phone usage.

Full results of the OTS study can be found at www.ots.ca.gov. The U.C. San Diego study can be found at <http://treds.ucsd.edu/>.

Average Teen Now Sending 60 Text Messages Per Day

A new report shows teens are sending more text messages on their mobile phones than ever before. According to the latest Pew Research Center Internet and American Life Project report on the topic of "Teens, Smart Phones and Texting," teens are sending a median of 60 texts per day, up from a median of 50 in 2009.

With older teens, the numbers are even higher. The median number of texts sent by youths ages 14 to 17 rose from 60 per day in 2009 to 100 per day in 2011. The "most enthusiastic" texters were older teen girls.

"Mobile devices increasingly dominate teens' communicative lives," according to Amanda Lenhart, a Pew senior research specialist and the author of the report. "Teens continue to privilege texting, while their use of e-mail, instant messaging and even voice calling has moved to the background."

This is a continuation of an already established trend. A Pew report in 2010 found that texting had become the dominant form of communication for teenagers.