



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SUMMARY OF DOT SAFETY INITIATIVES - 2009

DOT-WIDE

• DOT Safety Council

- Initiated in Oct. to tackle critical and cross-cutting safety issues across all transportation modes.
- First-ever multimodal department-wide approach to safety.
- Chaired by Dep. Secy. Porcari.
- Early accomplishment: Proposed transit safety legislative proposal brought before the council and improved through the input of safety experts across the entire Department.

AVIATION

CALL TO ACTION TO IMPROVE SAFETY, TRAINING

- After fatal crash of Colgan Air flight in Buffalo involving pilot error, FAA issued call to action to the aviation community to step up its approach to safety, mentoring, and professionalism. This triggered 12 regional meetings around the country with carriers and other industry professionals.
 - The majority of U.S. air carriers have responded to our Call to Action with written commitments to implement several “best practices” and to adhere to the highest professional standards.
- FAA is creating a new Office of Audit and Evaluation that will handle all public safety complaints and whistleblower contributions.
- FAA is strengthening the procedures used by air carriers, manufacturers, and the FAA to ensure that air carriers comply with air directives.
- FAA chartered an Aviation Rulemaking Committee to identify and implement long-term actions that can be completed by the third quarter of 2011.

RUNWAY SAFETY

- FAA, in cooperation with the American Association of Airport Executives and the MITRE Corporation, held the first International Runway Safety Conference to focus on reduction and eventual elimination of runway incursions and excursions.
- In FY2009 serious runway incursions dropped 50 percent. A positive development but more needs to be done.
- FAA and the aviation industry are committed to finding the most effective ways to eliminate these incidents.

HUDSON RIVER AIR SPACE

- FAA finalized a federal rule effective November 19, 2009, that will enhance safety by separating low-altitude, local aircraft flights over the Hudson River from flights transiting through the river airspace.
- These changes will define separate corridors for aircraft operating locally and those flying along the Hudson River area.
- Rule also now requires pilots to follow safety procedures that were previously recommended, but were not mandatory, e.g., maintaining a speed of 140 knots or less.

UPDATED WEATHER FLIGHT POLICY

- Scheduled airlines are already required to have an FAA-approved de-icing program as part of their winter operations plans.
- FAA is increasing the safety of winter flying by prohibiting takeoffs with “polished frost” -- frost buffed to make it smooth -- on the wings, stabilizers and control surfaces of several classes of aircraft.
- New rules effective January 30, 2010. 57 operators flying 188 aircraft affected by the rule changes. (The FAA already prohibits major and regional air carriers from operating with polished frost.)
- FAA proposing a rule requiring scheduled airlines to either retrofit their existing fleet with ice-detection equipment or make sure the ice protection system activates at the proper time.
- August 2009: FAA changed its certification standards for new airliner-type designs to require either the automatic activation of ice protection systems or a method to tell pilots when they should be activated.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

DISTRACTED DRIVING

- Hosted first national summit bringing experts, law makers, law enforcement, industry together to come up with remedies.
- President issued Executive Order banning federal employees from texting while driving government vehicles, using electronic equipment supplied by government while driving, or while driving private vehicles on official business.
- DOT initiating three separate actions:
 - Make permanent restrictions on the use of cell phones and other electronic devices in rail operations.
 - Ban text messaging altogether, and restrict the use of cell phones by truck and interstate bus operators.
 - Disqualify school bus drivers convicted of texting while driving, from maintaining their commercial driver's licenses.
- Calling on state and local governments to make distracted driving part of their state highway plans, and by passing state and local laws against distracted driving in all types of vehicles—especially school buses.

CAMPAIGN TO STOP IMPAIRED DRIVING

- Multi-million-dollar communications campaigns promoting national enforcement crackdowns on drunk driving.
 - Includes year-round messaging strategy that focuses heavily on leveraging the special media attention and public focus already surrounding key holidays and national events throughout the year where we see the numbers of fatalities on our roadways spike.
- Showcasing new impaired driving data that updates our impaired driving target audiences, shares better methods for reaching Hispanic audiences and highlights new media that is emerging in the form of digital, computerized, networked information and communication technologies.

MOTOR COACH SAFETY

New Motorcoach Safety Action Plan addresses major safety issues such as driver fatigue and inattention, vehicle rollover, occupant ejections and oversight of unsafe carriers:

- Plan proposes enhanced regulatory oversight of new and high risk motorcoach operators, as well as the increased use of new technologies.
- To address driver distraction, it proposes to initiate rulemaking to prohibit texting and limit the use of cellular telephones and other devices by motorcoach drivers.
- It also discusses requiring electronic on-board recording devices on all motorcoaches to better monitor drivers' duty hours to address fatigue, and enhanced oversight of unsafe carriers.
- Proposes to better protect motorcoach occupants by requiring the installation of seat belts and discusses additional measures such as the establishment of performance requirements for enhanced roof strength, fire safety, and emergency egress.
- Calls for safety improvements using technologies such as electronic stability control to prevent rollovers.

TRUCKING

- In March, advocacy groups asked DOT to overturn Bush Admin. 2008 Hours of Service Rule permitting 11-hour driving shifts for truckers.
- FMCSA has agreed to review the rule and then submit new proposed rule to OMB.
- A new rulemaking is under consideration for Electronic-On-Board Records (EOBR). EOBRs are effective safety compliance tools that have the potential to improve motor carriers' compliance with the hours-of-service regulations, and provide for more efficient documentation and review of drivers' records of duty status.
- Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks: Online resource to help States plan and implement a high-visibility traffic enforcement program. Help States educate motorists about the dangers of unsafe driving behaviors committed by cars around trucks, trucks around trucks, and trucks around other types of motor vehicles.

PIPELINE SAFETY

- DOT issued new Federal regulations for operators of natural gas and hazardous liquid pipelines. The two rules to be published in the Federal Register will include
 - a requirement for operators of natural gas distribution pipelines to adopt integrity management programs similar to current requirements already in place for larger transmission pipelines; and
 - strengthened management and oversight of control room operations for all types of DOT-regulated pipelines.

TRANSIT SAFETY

- FTA has undertaken aggressive nationwide security program with full cooperation and support from every transit agency.
- Conducted risk and vulnerability assessments and deployed technical assistance teams to help strengthen security and emergency preparedness plans.
- Funded emergency response drills conducted in conjunction with local fire, police, and emergency responders.
- Implemented a program to improve public transit focusing on three priorities: (1) training all transit employees and supervisors, (2) improving emergency preparedness, and (3) increasing public awareness of security issues.

Newly Formed Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety

- New committee will evaluate economic, technological, and institutional developments relating to transit safety and submit to the Administrator recommendations on promising new ideas and approaches for Federal policies and programs.

Rail Transit Safety Legislative Reform Proposal Delivered to Congress

Legislative proposal would to strengthen transit safety nationwide:

- Establish and enforce minimum Federal safety standards for rail transit systems that received Federal transit funding.
- Establish a safety certification program that would provide Federal assistance to eligible states that elect to carry out Federally-approved public transportation safety programs and enforce Federal regulations.
- Ensure that any state agency overseeing transit systems would be financially independent from the transit systems it oversees.