



Approved January 16, 2025

STATE OF WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION

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<https://wtsc.wa.gov/meetings/commission-meetings/>

The meeting recording, along with the Action Item or Motion items documented below constitute the full minutes of the meeting.

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION QUARTERLY MEETING

QUORUM PRESENT: YES NO

Date:	October 17, 2024
Chair:	Sam Low, Washington State Association of Counties
Call to Order:	10 a.m.
Adjourn:	11:46 a.m.

Agenda Item:	Approval of Meeting Minutes	Lead: All Commissioners
Minutes to be approved: July 18, 2024. Minutes were distributed prior to the meeting. No corrections requested. Minutes will be posted on the website.		
Changes Needed: N/A		

Agenda Item:	Director's Report	Lead: Shelly Baldwin, Director
<p>The preliminary fatal case count for the end of September shows a decrease from the same time in 2023. (End of September 2024 – 531 vs. 602 in 2023.) Hopeful this is the beginning of the decrease, but it will take longer to determine because of how the PTCR and death certificates are received.</p> <p>The agency received a grant a grant from the Governors Highway Safety Association as well as proviso funding from the 2024 Legislature to purchase Telematics data. This data comes from cell phones and insurance companies if drivers are using a dongle in their car. The data does not identify individual drivers, but it can create a picture of driver behavior. We posted two reports on our website, one from Cambridge Telematics and one from Micheline Mobile Telematics where you can see the data collected. We are pursuing a master contract for telematics and traffic network data analysis services. WSP, HCA, and DOL will be joining us. If anyone else is interested, please contact Dr. Staci Hoff.</p> <p>New Hires</p>		

Community Engagement Manager: Siggy Frank has extensive experience in community building, advocacy, and resource access, he is dedicated to fostering inclusive environments and elevating underrepresented voices. Siggy is committed to making meaningful impacts through strategic initiatives and compassionate leadership. He is passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work. Siggy is excited about being part of the Traffic Safety team.

Program Specialist: Erin Vroman, Program Specialist, was introduced at our July meeting, but was not yet onboard. Erin has now started and is excited to be at the Traffic Safety Commission.

Agenda Item:	Why? 51% Increase in Fatalities since 2019	Lead: Shelly Baldwin, WTSC
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Refer to presentation: ["Discussion: Why did 2023 Traffic Fatalities Increase?" Shelly Baldwin.](#)

Director Baldwin discussed the large increase in traffic fatalities since 2019. In 2019 there were 538 fatalities and in 2023 there were 810 (preliminary) fatalities. All crash factors are increasing and across the United States, Washington is above the national average for fatality rates. Shelly opened for discussion what Commissioners are seeing, new trends, and what they think may be contributing to this increase:

- Enforcement levels.
- Increase in DUIs that require blood results and a delay in getting those results.
- Law enforcement staffing.
- Unhoused population living close to interstates and other roadways.
- National statistics show Washington is ranked 51st, the lowest in the nation of officers on the streets.
- Assessments showing anxiety and depression rates are up.
- Fentanyl and substance use disorder continues to be a significant issue.
- Education aspects relating to younger drivers, motorcycle, and older drivers – DOL is looking into to see if it contributes to overall fatality rates.
- Increase in drug use and no drug enforcement in the state.
- Drug task forces depleted and disbanded root cause is lack of personnel.
- Speed – lack of perception of risk by drivers (stopped and ticketed). Need to work cooperatively to change the perception of this risk.
- Longstanding weaknesses - lack of law enforcement, fewer new drivers receiving driver training (disappeared from schools).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging reminds drivers of safe driving behavior, but if drivers haven't had basic education for a foundation on rules of road, and driver safety and understand risk – hard to remind them if they haven't learned in the first place. • COVID exploited the weaknesses and exacerbated things mentioned – anxiety and self-medication of substances increasing and regular use of cannabis. • Need improvements in infrastructure, sidewalks, protected bike lanes, roundabouts (Safe System Approach). • Increased speed. • WTSC provides overtime for law enforcement to proactively enforce the “Big 4” (impairment, speeding, distraction, and seatbelts) at various times during the past year it's been difficult to spend the funding; however, more recently we are seeing a higher use of the funding. 					
<p>Follow-Up:</p> <p>WTSC will follow up on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statics on depression and anxiety by age group. • The number of crashes in construction zones (contributing or part of the picture of increase in crashes). • What distinguishes Washington from other states in the increase of fatality rates? • Is Washington an outlier in the increase in anxiety and depression? An outlier in cannabis use? • How does Washington rate in relation to other states on mental health challenges? 					
<p>Lead:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Agenda Item:</td> <td>2025 Traffic Safety Summit</td> <td>Lead: Wade Alonzo, WTSC</td> </tr> </table>			Agenda Item:	2025 Traffic Safety Summit	Lead: Wade Alonzo, WTSC
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<p>WTSC will hold a Traffic Safety Summit in July 2025 at the Spokane Convention Center. The Summit will be a three-day event focusing on the Safe System Approach and Washington's 2025 Strategic Highway Safety Plan, Target Zero. More information will be coming on this event.</p>					
<p>Follow-Up: N/A</p>					
<p>Lead:</p>					

Agenda Item:	.05 BAC	Lead: Mark McKechnie, WTSC
<p><u>Refer to the “Impaired Driving and 0.05 BAC” presentation.</u> <i>*This presentation is an abbreviated version of a webinar Mark McKechnie presented in collaboration with the Department of Health and Liquor and Cannabis Board in August 2024, specifically for the Hospitality Industry to address concerns about 0.05 BAC.</i></p>		
<p>Expect bills to be introduced in the 2025 Legislative Session that change the impaired driving per se limit to 0.05 percent from 0.08 percent. The presentation focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard drink size and alcohol by volume. A standard drink size has a vast difference in alcohol content. • Blood alcohol concentration (BAC) and how a standard drink results in different BAC for men vs. women. • Alcohol effects and intoxication, typical effects, and predictable effects on driving at various BACs. Alcohol is the most common drug identified in an impaired driver in a fatal crash and is the most common single drug and most common polydrug in fatality crashes. • BAC and crash risk, crash rates for various BAC levels. • Increase in Washington fatalities involving an impaired driver from 2014-2023. • Countries with 0.05 BAC or lower. 0.05 BAC is common in other countries. North America is currently the outlier. • Actions and beliefs of people about driving after drinking. The proposal to lower the BAC per se limit is consistent with the actions and beliefs of most people. • Lower BAC limits and number of fatalities; fewer fatal crashes and fewer non-fatal crashes in countries with a lower BAC. Preventative, encourages people to separate drinking from driving, change how people travel, plan ahead, use ride share, transit, have a sober driver. • Concerns about lowering the BAC. • Cultural changes to separate drinking from driving. In countries with a lower BAC it is culturally unacceptable to drink and drive; people help each other to avoid drinking and driving. • Reducing the BAC has a high benefit but a low cost. Studies show when other countries lowered their BAC, they did not see a decrease in alcohol consumption or a negative effect on the hospitality industry; however, they did see a reduction in fatal crashes. 		
Follow-Up:		
Lead:		

Agenda Item:	Driver Education and Licensing	Lead: Dan Cooke, DOL
<p>Refer to presentation: “The Future of Driver Education: Washington Leading the Way” Dan Cooke.</p> <p>The presentation focused on the overhaul of the Driver Education Program. DOL’s mission is to equip new drivers with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors they need to navigate roads safely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhaul of the Washington Driver Education Program • Three core areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Standards: Most comprehensive standards in the United States; consistent language, integrates modern vehicle safety technologies, and emphasis on driver behavior, responsibility, and focused attention behind the wheel. ○ Curriculum: A roadmap for educators; engaging activities and games, tools for measuring student understanding and progress, flexible and adaptable, and provided to all driver training schools in Washington. ○ Assessments: Redesigned knowledge tests to better assess the driver’s understanding of road and the environment in which they are operating. Focusing on critical areas -- vehicle operation, occupant protection, sharing road with diverse users, driver behavior, using plain language and increasing language offering. Innovative approaches to assessment accommodation. • Increasing support for driver training instructors. Providing an instructor training program to equip instructors with the skills and knowledge to deliver this enhanced curriculum effectively. • Partnered with John Hopkins University to evaluate current testing and scoring. Anticipate having a new skills test grounded in scientific evidence and aligned with best practices. • The new driver guide has more accessible imagery, a diverse representation of the population, and how information is delivered. Five areas of driver education: licensing, vehicles, driver, roads and risk and hazard management and mitigation. 		
Follow-Up:		
Lead:		

Agenda Item:	PUBLIC COMMENT	

Topics for Future Meetings	Proposed Date/Month	Lead

Meeting Attendees	
Commissioners	Organization
Marcus Glasper, DOL	DOL
Sue Birch, HCA	HCA
Megan Cotton, GOV	GOV
Sam Low, Washington State Association of Counties	WSAC
George Steele, Judiciary	Judiciary
Commissioner Designee	Organization
James Mjor, WSP	WSP
Todd Mountin, DOH	DOH
Sarah Mariani, HCA	HCA
Patti Enbody, OSPI	OSPI
WTSC Staff	
Shelly Baldwin	WTSC Staff
Wade Alonzo	WTSC Staff
Megan Baker	WTSC Staff
Debi Besser	WTSC Staff
Tony Bledsoe	WTSC Staff
Peter Corier	WTSC Staff
Mandie Dell	WTSC Staff
Edica Esqueda	WTSC Staff
Siggy Frank	WTSC Staff
Christina Fremont	WTSC Staff
Dawn Hernandez	WTSC Staff
Dr. Staci Hoff	WTSC Staff
Debbie Johnson	WTSC Staff
Jessie Knudsen	WTSC Staff
Dr. Janine Koffel	WTSC Staff
Kayla McCown	WTSC Staff
Mark McKechnie	WTSC Staff
Mark Medalen	WTSC Staff

Gerri Nelson	WTSC Staff
Jerry Noviello	WTSC Staff
Julie Otto	WTSC Staff
Pam Pannkuk	WTSC Staff
Terry Ponton	WTSC Staff
Penny Rarick	WTSC Staff
Dr. Max Roberts	WTSC Staff
Bernie Shah	WTSC Staff
Rainboe Sims-Jones	WTSC Staff
Erica Stineman	WTSC Staff
Erin Vroman	WTSC Staff
Abby Williams	WTSC Staff
Members of the Public	Type
Glenda Coms, WSCJTC	External
Dan Cooke, DOL	External
Jennifer Dieguez, DOH	External
Haley Falley, TZM	External
Gregory Foster, CannObserv	External
Tom Hill	External
King 5 News, Drew Mikkelsen and Tom Tedford	External
Rachelle Nugent, TZM	External
Gabe Philips, WSDOT	External
Abigail Potter, WA Trucking Associations	External
Alison Radford, DOL	External
Amy Shaffer	External
Mindy Smith, OSPI	External
Bob Thompson, Statewide LEL	External
TVW Streaming	External
Cesi Velez, Child Passenger Safety Project Mgr	External
Frederick Wade, DOL	External