

Overview of the on-going development of a Highway Safety Manual

Margaret Parkhill, P.Eng.
Dave Banks, P.Eng. (presenter)
iTRANS Consulting Inc.

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Abstract

Better quantitative methods and a single authoritative document for estimating safety effects are needed to facilitate the incorporation of transportation safety of all road users into the decision-making process. The need for a highway safety manual was identified over a decade ago. Content development of the First Edition is currently underway.

The purpose of the Highway Safety Manual is “*To provide the best factual information and tools in a useful form to facilitate roadway planning, design, operations, and maintenance decisions based on explicit consideration of their safety consequences.*” The Highway Safety Manual is intended to become a widely accepted resource within the transportation profession for quantitative safety analysis, just as the Highway Capacity Manual is generally accepted for quantitative operational analyses. Objectives of the Highway Safety Manual are to encourage: evidence-based decision making, more resources focused on safety research, and innovative approaches to improving safety.

New methodologies have been developed to enhance the quality of information included in the Highway Safety Manual. The First Edition will include concise summaries of validated highway research and analytical tools for predicting the impact of geometric and operational decisions on road safety.

This paper provides a brief history of the Highway Safety Manual, an overview of the outline and planned contents of the First Edition, the new methodologies developed and applied, an update on work completed to date, and a review of the next steps. Sample draft content related to geometric design and roadside elements will be presented as examples of Highway Safety Manual content. The Highway Safety Manual is planned for publication in 2008.