

# How to get Safe Systems wrong And how to get them right

Eric Dumbaugh and Seth LaJeunesse

*CSCRS Research to Practice Bytes, November 16, 2022*

# Why Pitfalls rather than Pointers?

- Our field is replete with “prescriptive” guidance on ways to create a Safe System for all road users.
- Prescriptions, like standards, can stymie creativity, suppressing or delaying useful experiments and trials to improve safety.
- Instead of offering more prescriptions, we humbly introduce 10 “proscriptions” or suggestions to avoid common pitfalls on the road to a Safe System.

## 10 Common Pitfalls Toward Creating a Safe System

1. Do more of the same to address traffic injury.
2. Set uninspiring and unethical safety goals in your safety plans.
3. Talk about crashes as isolated, unpreventable accidents.
4. Design roads completely separately from land use.
5. Equate shared responsibility with equal responsibility.
6. Base land use and transportation decisions on forecasted traffic.
7. Rely on only one agency to conduct serious crash investigations.
8. Decouple project planning and programming from the safety goals in long-range and Vision Zero plans.
9. Assert that compliance with design manuals will automatically result in better road safety.
10. Assume that technology will save us.

Do more of the same to address traffic injury.

Set uninspiring and unethical safety goals in  
your safety plans.

Talk about crashes as isolated, unpreventable accidents.

Design roads completely separately from land use.

Equate shared responsibility with equal responsibility.



Base land use and transportation decisions on  
forecasted traffic.

Rely on only one agency to conduct serious  
crash investigations.

Decouple project planning and programming  
from the safety goals in long-range and Vision  
Zero plans.

Assert that compliance with design manuals will automatically result in better road safety.

Assume that technology will save us.

Thank you! And join us on Dec. 14 for part two!