Collaborative Sciences Center for ROAD SAFETY

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The purpose of the following report (one of six) is to orient readers to the professional skills and potential contributions of Emergency Service Professionals for advancing Vision Zero. These reports were produced by the 2022 – 2023 NC Vision Zero Capstone team at UNC-Chapel Hill and are the result of a sector-specific landscape scan and interviews with experts in the field.

The Diverse Roles of Emergency Service Professionals in Achieving Vision Zero

Introduction

Vision Zero is a growing movement throughout the United States to eliminate all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries and to ensure the safe and equitable mobility for all road users, no matter how they get around. This approach to transportation safety requires collaboration among diverse groups of professionals, working in collaboration with communities to ensure transportation decision-making is evidence-driven and equitable across diverse road users. The diverse groups and coalitions needed to support Vision Zero implementation include local traffic planners, engineers, policy makers, public health professionals, emergency responders, community members, and other key partners.

The Emergency Services Sector

The emergency services sector is inclusive of all organizations providing emergency response and support for crashes, enforcement of traffic laws, and prevention education on safe pedestrian, vehicle, and cycling behaviors. This sector may include emergency medical services personnel (EMS), fire response, and law enforcement, and these groups provide a range of strategic support among Vision Zero coalitions. This may include advancing crash prevention programs, traffic safety initiatives, and improving local crash data to inform policy and planning development. Emergency services, as all-hazard responders, can also engage as innovators with coalitions to achieve Vision Zero.

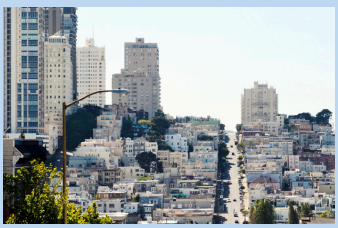
> *"These [emergency service professionals], fire, and police are only reacting to poor design. And the design is just not a street speed. It happens to do with everything that's around that street. That's the difference."**
>
> *– Emergency Service Professional*

Case Study #1

Made by Ferrara Fire Apparatus, the purchase of smaller "Vision Zero" fire engines accommodated the development of narrower car lanes and bicycle lanes in Portland, OR. These fire engines are compatible with safer street design and have the ability to conduct sharp right turns as opposed to typical engines. Narrower car lanes also led to shorter crosswalks, improving pedestrian safety.

Case Study #2

A study conducted by the San Francisco, CA City Controller's Office found that automated speed enforcement improved road safety and reduced traffic-related injuries and deaths in six US cities including Chicago, Denver, New York City, Portland, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. The review found that public engagement, lowering citation fees, including school zones in the enforcement area, using mobile cameras, encrypting data, authorizing citation issuance to the registered vehicle owner for simpler administration, and requiring a report of program metrics improved the effectiveness and success of program implementation.



How Emergency Service Professionals Can Support Vision Zero

Leadership

- Incorporating Vision Zero and Safe System approaches in internal emergency personnel fleet management policies
- Collaborating with other departments for comprehensive crash data analysis
- Supporting implementation of automated enforcement technology such as red light and safety cameras
- Collaborating with community members to elevate traffic and safety-related concerns
- Providing bystander training for crashes

Resources

- Educating the community on pedestrian, vehicle, and cycling safety initiatives
- Providing departmental training on data collection best practices
- Conducting public awareness campaigns to assert departmental policies related to traffic enforcement
- Purchasing new equipment that accommodates safe-street initiatives, such as automated enforcement technology or smaller vehicles

Skills and Knowledge

- Reviewing internal enforcement data to identify any disparities to determine any inequitable practices
- Sharing first-hand knowledge of the realities and violence of serious crashes

Crash Response

- Collecting accurate and complete crash reports
- Documenting concerning patterns in high speed and/or crash areas
- Making recommendations for improving response time to serious crashes

Making Data Accessible

- Improving data collection systems to provide accurate crash data, including "near misses"
- Sharing data with task force partners to compare crash data with other factors (e.g., post-crash care response times)

Equitable Enforcement

- Examining departmental disparities in traffic enforcement
- Assisting with implementation of new automated enforcement technology, with considerable attention to equity

Case Study #3

In San Francisco, several departments joined to collaborate, including the San Francisco Police Department, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, the Office of the Medical Examiner, and the San Francisco Department of Public Health to conduct monthly reporting and reconciliation of all traffic-related deaths in the city. The protocol includes an overview of data sources, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and an explanation of definitions and reporting templates.

Key Resources for Emergency Service Professionals Interested in Learning More About Vision Zero

- Vision Zero Core Elements Summary
- Traffic Justice: Achieving Effective and Equitable Traffic Enforcement in the Age of Vision Zero
- Vision Zero Traffic Fatality Protocol
- Moving from Vision to Action: Fundamental Principles, Policies & Practices to Advance Vision Zero in the U.S.

> *"I think the formation of the [Highway Safety Planning] committee was amazing because you have law enforcement, and not just folks who are higher up in an organization, but people who are actually responding to calls and really understood what was happening, boots on the ground.*"*
>
> *– Public Health Professional*

** Quotes have been edited for clarity; full quotes are available upon request.*

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