



# DRIVER SAFETY LETTER



**NPTC**  
National Private Truck Council

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## DOT Announces New Safety Strategy

## February 2023

Last month, the Department of Transportation released the National Roadway Safety Strategy, a comprehensive approach to significantly reduce serious injuries and deaths on the nation's highways. The strategy works by building and reinforcing multiple layers of protection, both to prevent crashes from happening in the first place and to minimize the harm caused to those involved when crashes do occur.

This is a departure from the conventional safety approach because it focuses on both human mistakes and vulnerability—then designs a system with many redundancies in place to protect everyone.

DOT's ultimate goal is a future with zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries. In support of this approach, safety programs are focused on infrastructure, human behavior, responsible oversight of the vehicle and transportation industry, and emergency response. The strategy incorporates the following principles:

- **Death and Serious Injuries are Unacceptable:** A Safe System Approach prioritizes the elimination of crashes resulting in death and serious injuries.
- **Humans Make Mistakes:** People will inevitably make mistakes and decisions that can lead or contribute to crashes, but the transportation system can be designed and operated to accommodate certain types and levels of human mistakes and avoid death and serious injuries when a crash occurs.
- **Humans Are Vulnerable:** Human bodies have physical limits for tolerating crash forces before death or serious injury occurs. Therefore, it is critical to design and operate a human-centric transportation system and accommodates physical human vulnerabilities.
- **Responsibility is Shared:** All stakeholders, including government at all levels, industry, non-profit/advocacy, researchers, and the general public—are vital to preventing fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways.
- **Safety is Proactive:** Proactive tools should be used to identify and address safety issues in the transportation system, rather than waiting for crashes to occur and reacting afterwards.
- **Redundancy is Crucial:** Reducing risks requires all parts of the transportation system be strengthened, so if one part fails, the other parts still protect people.

DOT plans to implement the safety initiative around five complementary objectives corresponding to the Safe System Approach elements:

- **Safer People:** Encourage safe, responsible driving and behavior by people who use our roads and create conditions that prioritize their ability to reach their destination unharmed.
- **Safer Roads:** Design roadway environments to mitigate human mistakes and account for injury tolerances, to encourage safer behaviors, and to facilitate safe travel by the most vulnerable users.
- **Safer Vehicles:** Expand the availability of vehicle systems and features to help prevent crashes and minimize the impact of crashes on both occupants and non-occupants.
- **Safer Speeds:** Promote safer speeds in all roadway environments through a combination of thoughtful, equitable, context-appropriate roadway design, targeted education, outreach campaigns and enforcement.
- **Post-Crash Care:** Enhance the survivability of crashes through expedient access to emergency medical care, while creating a safe working environment for vital first responders and preventing secondary crashes through robust traffic incident management practices.

This strategy recognizes that pursuing these objectives and achieving a vision of zero fatalities will take sustained and concerted action from all sectors and all levels of government, and from a wide array of professional disciplines and organizations. Let's do our part!

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*The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and **Centerline Drivers**, is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at [tmoore@nptc.org](mailto:tmoore@nptc.org) or (703)838-8898.*