



Secretary's Policy

Number: SP 01-25

Effective Date: October 15, 2025

Supersedes: New

Title: Joint Secretary's Policy on Road Safety

Background

WHEREAS a California where safety for all who travel is of the highest priority.

WHEREAS from 2013 to 2021, California experienced an overall increase of approximately 29% in traffic fatalities on public roads. The deaths and serious injuries caused by crashes on California's transportation system present a public health challenge. Injury prevention emphasizes upstream, system-level approaches that make safer outcomes the default. Prioritizing population-wide measures drives measurable, equitable reductions in serious injuries and fatalities.

WHEREAS in 2020, California demonstrated national leadership by being among the first states to formally adopt the Safe System Approach as the method by which we will aim to achieve zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2050.

WHEREAS CalSTA documented the State's commitment to the Safe System Approach in visionary documents including, but not limited to, its 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure, the California Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2020-2024 and numerous interviews and press releases.

WHEREAS the Safe System Approach, grounded in international best practices, provides a proactive, data-driven framework that emphasizes systemic prevention while acknowledging that individual decisions also affect safety. Each of CalSTA's departments, boards and commissions has an important role.

The Safe System Approach Principles:

Death and serious injuries are unacceptable.

The Safe System Approach prioritizes eliminating crashes that cause fatal or severe harm.

Humans make mistakes. The system can accommodate certain types and levels of human mistakes, and avoid death and serious injuries when a crash occurs.

Humans are vulnerable. Roads and vehicles can be designed around the physical limits of the human body.

Responsibility is shared. Governments, industry and the public all play a role in preventing harm.

Safety is proactive. Risks are managed before crashes happen through upstream, preventive action.

Redundancy is essential. Multiple layers—road, speed, vehicle, user, post-crash care, and safer land use—work together to protect people.

WHEREAS since the adoption of the Safe System Approach, California has markedly expanded road safety investment, setting record Office of Traffic Safety grant levels, programming hundreds of millions more through Caltrans' Highway Safety Improvement Program and scaling the Active Transportation Program and federal Safe Streets and Roads for All awards, implementing projects that reduce deaths and serious injuries.

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WHEREAS since 2021, fatalities have begun to level and trend downward, an encouraging sign that may be attributable to the early impact of Safe System-aligned initiatives advanced by CalSTA departments, boards and commissions as well as numerous partners and organizations.

WHEREAS maintaining this momentum requires embedding the Safe System Approach into practice by translating and integrating the public health principles of injury prevention practice and policy into the efforts of CalSTA departments, boards and commissions to more effectively reduce fatalities and serious injuries.

Our Vision

A California where every person can reach their destination free from fatal or serious harm.

Purpose & Scope

This policy sets the direction for all CalSTA departments, boards and commissions to integrate the Safe System Approach — as the application of public health and injury prevention principles in transportation — into decisions, investments and operations. This policy establishes a common framework for prevention of fatal and serious injuries by intervening at the system-level to have a population-level effect.

Policy Commitment

CalSTA and its departments, boards and commissions are encouraged to strengthen cross sector partnerships to embed safety into the broader systems that shape people's daily lives; address the root causes of traffic harm by acting on upstream factors that determine risk via exposure, crash likelihood and injury severity; and institutionalize public health and injury prevention principles so population-level and systemwide safety is a guiding consideration in policies, programs and investments.

Interim Goal

This policy establishes an aspirational, interim goal to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries by 30% on California's public roads by 2035, using 2021 as the baseline year.

Action Plan

CalSTA will reconvene and expand the Zero Traffic Fatalities Task Force to produce a prioritized, cross-sector set of recommendations for policy consideration, to achieve the Interim Goal. CalSTA will publish the recommendations by January 2027. The California Department of Public Health will participate, and the Task Force will apply an injury-prevention mindset in developing recommendations.

Call to Action

CalSTA reaffirms its leadership on the Safe System Approach and expects that pertinent state and local agencies and partners will advance proven, upstream measures to save lives and help close inequities.

Signed,



Toks Omishakin
California Transportation Secretary



Kim Johnson
California Health and Human Services Agency Secretary