

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT REVIEW Summary FY09

Background

In April of 2003 the General Accounting Office issued a report to Congress entitled, “Better Guidance Could Improve Oversight of State Highway Safety Programs,” (GAO-03-474). In April of 2004, Regional Operations and Program Delivery (ROPD) provided the regional administrators with an oversight process. One component of the process was the Special Management Review (SMR). The SMR is designed to be conducted in a State that demonstrates consistently worse than the national average performance and progress less than half of that recorded by the Nation as a whole. The SMR is one component of the ROPD State Highway Safety Programs oversight quality assurance process and was codified in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

SMR’s are conducted in NHTSA’s two high priority areas, seat belts and impaired driving. Each review looks at management and operational practices and examines four critical areas of State performance: including leadership, program management, planning, and evaluation. A Performance Enhancement Plan (PEP), developed collaboratively with the State, lists strategies that will be used to implement recommendations or required actions that result from the SMR.

Summary

During FY2009, the fifth year in which SMR’s were conducted, 19 States were triggered for an SMR, twelve for seatbelts and seven for impaired driving. Of the states triggered, seven States were exempted from having a seat belt SMR, five States were exempted from having an impaired driving SMR, and two States (one for seat belts and one for impaired driving) were deferred to the following year. Exemptions were based on the fact that an SMR or assessment was conducted during the past three years.* Of the remaining special management reviews, three were for occupant protection and one was for impaired driving. For one State this was the second management review in the same program area. Appendix A has a listing of FY 2009 States that were Special Management Review candidates.

It should be noted that a review, initiated in FY 2008, of all SMR processes and documents was completed in FY 2009. In 2008, a change in terminology of review results was instituted with program deficiencies changed to program management considerations and recommendations changed to recommended actions. This change was reflected in the FY 2008 Annual Report. Additional changes in the areas of critical performance were instituted in FY 2009 and are reflected in this report. The change consolidates the areas of performance from leadership issues, project issues, spending issues, legislative issues, State’s priorities, and evaluation issues into leadership, management, planning, and evaluation.

Similar to previous years, the number and type of specific strengths, program management considerations and recommended actions reflected the uniqueness of each State. There were a total of 19 strengths, 41 management considerations, 82 recommended actions and 1 finding.

* The three year calculation for an SMR is based on the date the final report was issued to the State.

The finding which related to purchase of equipment over \$5,000 without prior NHTSA approval was resolved before the final report was issued. A breakdown by critical area is listed in tables one through four.

Table 1. Summary of Strengths

	Seat Belt (3 States)	Impaired Driving (1 State)	Total
Leadership	5	0	5
Management	3	1	4
Planning	7	1	8
Evaluation	2	0	2
TOTAL	17	2	19

Table 2. Summary of Program Management Considerations

	Seat Belt (3 States)	Impaired Driving (1 State)	Total
Leadership	9	2	11
Management	9	4	13
Planning	8	3	11
Evaluation	5	1	6
TOTAL	31	10	41

Table 3. Summary of Recommended Actions

	Seat Belt (3 States)	Impaired Driving (1 State)	Total
Leadership	21	3	24
Management	20	6	26
Planning	20	3	23
Evaluation	7	2	9
TOTAL	68	14	82

Table 4. Summary of Findings

	Seat Belt (3 States)	Impaired Driving (1 State)	Total
Leadership	0	0	0
Management	1	0	1
Planning	0	0	0
Evaluation	0	0	0
TOTAL	1	0	1

Highlights of Program Management Considerations and Corresponding Recommended Actions

Management considerations and resulting recommended actions were almost equally spread between leadership, management, and planning. Improved statewide (three States) and local coordination (2 States) through a task force or program or coordinator, closer work with and better utilization enforcement, including law enforcement liaisons (four States) and strategic use of media (4 States) were the most frequently discussed issues. Others areas addressed by more than one State include implementing performance based measures, education of legislators, training, and improved evaluation. One impaired driving assessment and one seat belt assessment were recommended.

This is the first year States were eligible for a second SMR. Two second year States, Montana and North Dakota, were on the final list. Montana received a deferral until FY 2010 and the North Dakota SMR was conducted.

Evaluations

States have the opportunity to express their thoughts about the SMR process by completing an evaluation form after the review. For FY 2009, one State returned the SMR evaluation form. The evaluation indicated that the State Highway Safety Office was satisfied with the review and felt that the recommended actions would improve performance.

Discussion

The number of SMR's conducted is small and thus it is hard to make any recommendations based on four reports. The most frequent issues to surface are addressed with States on a regular basis by regional administrators and program managers. Additionally, NHTSA has addressed the issue of Statewide coordination in the Reauthorization Proposal by requiring States with high impaired driving fatality rates to convene a Statewide Impaired Driving Task Force as a condition of receiving 410 funds.

From this year forward, it is likely there will be States that qualify for a repeat SMR. NHTSA will need to evaluate these States closely to determine the cause for repetition. Results could have implications for revising the SMR selection criteria or the resulting recommended actions.

Appendix A

Examples of topics covered under each area are listed below

Leadership

- Governor's Support
- GR/HSO Director leadership (seatbelt/impaired driving program)
- Support of National campaigns, existing laws, policies and legislative efforts
- Enforcement

Program Management

- Program coordination
- Staff training
- Resource utilization – this would include funds other than Federal, as well as other types of resources
- Allocation and use of federal funds
- Program implementation
- Technical assistance
- Monitoring

Planning

- Data – driven problem identification
- Strategic planning with goals and performance measures
- Inclusion of partners in planning
- Planning sufficient programs
- Project selection process
- Use of proven countermeasures and best practices
- Enforcement
- Marketing
- Use of earned and paid media plans
- Outreach, including diverse communities

Evaluation

- Use of State and National data systems
- Behavioral and attitudinal surveys (includes seat belt observation surveys)
- Reporting
- Measuring and tracking performance
- Conducting and implementing recommendations of program area assessments

FY 2009
States Identified for Special Management Reviews
Listed by Region

Region	State	Program Area	Status	Reason for Exemption
1	Massachusetts	Seat belt	conducted	
	Rhode Island	Seat belt	exempt	SMR 2007
2	None			
3	Virginia	Seat belt	exempt	SMR 2008
	West Virginia	Impaired driving	exempt	SMR 2006
4	Alabama	Impaired driving	exempt	SMR 2006, Assessment 2008
	South Carolina	Impaired driving	exempt	Assessment 2008
5	Wisconsin	Seat belt	exempt	SMR 2006
	Wisconsin	Impaired driving	exempt	SMR 2007
6	Louisiana	Seat belt	exempt	SMR 2007
	Louisiana	Impaired driving	exempt	SMR 2008
	Oklahoma	Seat belt	conducted	
7	Arkansas	Seat belt	exempt	SMR 2006
	Missouri	Seat belt	exempt	SMR 2007
8	North Dakota	Impaired driving	conducted	
	Wyoming	Seat belt	exempt	SMR (hybrid) 2006
9	Arizona	Seat belt	deferred	Deferred until 2010
10	Idaho	Seat belt	conducted	
	Montana	Impaired driving	deferred	Deferred until 2010
	Montana	Seat belt	exempt	SMR 2006;Assessment 2009

