

Strategies for Distributing "Speed Shatters Life" Campaign Public Service Advertising Materials

The success of the "*Speed Shatters Life*" campaign is directly correlated to the aggressiveness of individual efforts to encourage the placement of NHTSA's public service advertising (PSA) materials. There is no paid placement of any of these PSAs.

"*Speed Shatters Life*" is a nationwide, multimedia PSA campaign designed to:

- Increase awareness with the motoring public about the dangers of driving too fast for conditions or exceeding the posted speed limit;
- Obtain the public's voluntary compliance with posted speed limits; and
- Provide support for law enforcement agencies actively involved in enforcement programs.

Strategies for Marketing the Campaign Materials

Contact media outlets in your area (newspapers, magazines, radio, broadcast and cable television, etc.) and highway safety advocates that might carry the campaign message (local businesses, state and local government agencies, religious groups, non-profit or public service organizations, schools, and community groups). The following information applies equally to all.

The Message

There are two points to be stressed with any media outlet or supportive organization: first, that today law enforcement faces difficult challenges with limited resources, increased demand for services, and frequent reassignment of police traffic enforcement assets to fight drugs and crime; secondly, research shows motorists erroneously believe that speeding is not a great risk to safety or as serious as other traffic violations. On the contrary, the consequences of excessive speed include:

- Greater potential for loss of vehicle control;
- Reduced effectiveness of occupant protection equipment;
- Increased stopping distance after the driver perceives a danger;
- Increased degree of crash severity leading to more disabling injuries;
- The unexpected economic and even psychological implications of a speed-related crash; and
- Increased fuel consumption/cost.



The "*Speed Shatters Life*" Campaign is equal in scope to NHTSA's other major outreach efforts, like safety belts and impaired driving.

Identifying the Media

Identify media outlets you wish to contact by checking the local telephone directory's yellow pages, consulting a media directory at the library, reading a publication's masthead, or watching the credits after a television production. Read, listen to, or watch the outlet to obtain further information on format, style, audience and other public service campaigns they may already endorse.

Contacting the Media

Localization of the campaign is the key to successful PSA placement. Be familiar with PSA materials that you are promoting. Know the abstract data on speed-related crashes overall and your state and region in particular so you can discuss the socioeconomic impact of this issue at any level. Contact local law enforcement agencies to determine what they are doing related to speed enforcement and how you can support them and localize the issue.

Telephone the media outlet to determine the name (and correct spelling) of the public service director or editor responsible for PSAs. Before telephoning, outline on a single page the key points you wish to make in your conversation, tailored to address the particular needs and interests of the media you are dealing with; for instance, editorial writers want the social implications and business editors the economic side. Remember, the person you will be speaking with is constantly approached by spokespersons for other, equally worthy public service projects requesting limited air time or print space. This is why you must know your subject well and make a case for it in the shortest possible time. Keep the call short and conclude by suggesting that you will deliver the

campaign materials in person, which is preferable to mailing them. Such effort demonstrates a personal commitment to the issue of speed and will allow you to expand upon the campaign and the PSAs. It can also reinforce the campaign's local aspect.

If you must write, in lieu of a visit, personalize the pitch letter that accompanies the PSAs with the person's name (not "Dear Sir") and title. Confirm their receipt of the material by telephone within a few days of the anticipated delivery.

Follow up on your contact by watching, reading, or listening to the media to see if they use the campaign's materials. If they use your PSA, thank them with a short note or telephone call. If they do not use the spot, thank them for at least considering it. If appropriate, ask for feedback concerning why it was not used so that you can better plan your future materials and campaigns.

Continue to monitor the local media for any speed-related news. Note the name of the journalist or reporter covering the story and contact them to suggest a follow-on piece about the "*Speed Shatters Life*" Campaign. Be prepared to offer current NHTSA and state background materials to assist them in developing a story.

The media will often adopt one or two public service campaigns and become closely associated with them for an extended period. If you -- with the support of local government, service organizations, or law enforcement agencies -- can convince them of the importance of this issue to the community, they may become involved, thereby ensuring better coverage of the "*Speed Shatters Life*" public service advertising campaign.



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration

