

CERS Center for Excellence in Rural Safety



The Center for Excellence in Rural Safety (CERS) facilitates citizen-centered research, training, and outreach activities related to rural transportation safety.

The Center's research activities explore policy, behavior, and technology innovations through projects addressing safety-conscious planning, ITS and rural emergency response, integrated policy approaches, and related human factors, societal trends, and stakeholder needs analysis.

The Center is a joint program between the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs State and Local Policy Program and the Center for Transportation Studies, and sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration. Congress created the Center for Excellence in Rural Safety in July 2005 as part of a broader, multiyear,

multimillion-dollar directive establishing four national centers for surface transportation excellence in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) transportation funding legislation.

www.ruralsafety.umn.edu

Key Facts

- Half of the 42,000 crash-related fatalities in the United States each year occur on two-lane rural roads.
- Sixty-two percent of all alcohol-related fatalities involving passenger vehicles occur on rural roads.
- Crash victims are five to seven times more likely to die if arrival to a hospital exceeds 30 minutes. The average time between a crash and hospital arrival is 52 minutes in rural areas.

Rural Transportation Safety Research

Current research projects at the Center focus on several aspects of rural safety:

Behavior

Behavioral and Social Trends Affecting Rural Safety

This project aims to identify prominent behavioral and social issues facing transportation safety in rural America through a multicounty case study in rural Minnesota. By studying the region's population, traffic accidents, highway deaths, and driver behaviors, the Center will produce policy recommendations, data sets, maps, and a findings paper.

Technology

Rural Safety, Health, and Emergency Response

This project investigates how information technologies can speed up emergency response to traffic accidents in rural settings through a case study of a recently implemented emergency response collaboration between the Minnesota DOT, Minnesota State Patrol, GM OnStar, and the Mayo Clinic.

Policy

Best Practices in Rural Transportation Safety Planning

All states were required by SAFETEA-LU to submit plans for statewide transportation safety programs in the first quarter of 2007. This project will help inform preparation of a transportation safety plan by studying the safety plans of six states and producing a "best practices" report.

Crosscutting

National Experiences with Policy Levers for Improving Rural Safety

This project aims to understand the information system requirements, features, and end-user (policy decision makers/legislators) needs for the construction of a visual-oriented template that could be used to present a wide range of useful safety related information for informed decision making.

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