

Executive Leadership Team Meeting

Statewide Impaired Driving Strategic Plan

July 16, 2025

Attendees:

Department of Transportation; Chris Dorrington, Director and chair of the Executive Leadership Team
Department of Justice-Motor Vehicle Division-(DOJ-MVD) delegate for Lauri Bakri: Anna Mhoon
Department of Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS) delegate for Charlie Brereton: Deputy Director David Gerard
Department of Revenue (DOR) delegate for Brendan Beatty: Nathan Showalter
Montana Highway Patrol (MHP): Colonel Kurt Sager
Montana Tavern Association: John Iverson
Officer of Court Administrators Office (OCA): Dave McAlpin
Senator Sara Novak
Pam Langve-Davis, Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) Manager & ELT secretary, MDT
Virtual Attendees:

Judge Mary Jane Knisely, 13th Judicial Court, Yellowstone County
Natalia Bowser, Board of Crime Control
Department of Correction (DOC) delegate for Brian Gootkin: Mark Wlazlak
Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) delegate for Commissioner Sarah Swanson: Jake Sandau
Montana Association Chiefs of Police: Chief Steve Snavelly
Montana Sheriffs & Peace Officers (MSPOA): Lewis & Clark County Undersheriff Brett Colbert
Office of Public Instruction (OPI) delegate for Superintendent Susan Hedalen: Dylan Klapmeier, Chief of Staff
Invitees:
Alison Malensek, Impaired Driving Program Coordinator, State Highway Traffic Safety Section (SHTSS), MDT
Dacia English, Alcoholic Beverage Control Division, Department of Revenue
Doug McBroom, Statewide Planning and Modal Operations, MDT

Meeting purpose

Approval of the Statewide Impaired Driving Strategic Plan. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) serves as the Statewide DUI Task Force and is responsible for approving the Statewide Impaired Driving Strategic Plan. Following the introductions there were no public stakeholders logged into the virtual meeting or in attendance and as such there was no public comment.

State Highway Traffic Safety Section program coordinator, Alison Malensek, provided a recap of the Statewide Impaired Driving Plan documents. Malensek reiterated that Montana is classified as a high-range state for alcohol-impaired driving fatalities. High-range classification is for states that have a .60 or higher for alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. Montana was at .68 for the calendar years of 2020-2022 (Fatality Analysis Reporting System Data).

There are additional federal requirements for high-range states to receive Impaired Driving Counter Measure funding from the National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA). In addition to having a Statewide Impaired Driving Task Force with Authority (Executive Leadership Team), the extra requirements include:

- Impaired Driving Statewide Plan that adheres to the NHTSA's Programmatic Guide for Impaired Driving.
- Conduct an Impaired Driving Assessment and address responses to assessment recommendations.
- Projects that will be Implemented with NHTSA funding related to Impaired Driving Activities.
- Description of spending and projects implemented for impaired driving activities contribute to the State's performance targets.

The current Federal Fiscal Year 2023 Impaired Driving Assessment will expire in the Fall of calendar year 2025. To continue to comply with the High Range requirements as contained in the Code of Federal Regulations the state has scheduled a new assessment set to take place the week of November 3-7, 2025.

All requirements have been included in Montana's Statewide Impaired Driving Strategic Plan.

The July meeting materials were distributed July 2, 2025, to the Executive Leadership Team for review. The documents that make up the Statewide Impaired Driving Strategic Plan includes the

- Federal Fiscal Year 2026 Impaired Driving Strategic Plan
- Federal Fiscal Year 2023 Impaired Driving Assessment & State's Response (Updated for FFY26)
- Federal Fiscal Year 2026 Impaired Driving Projects

Approval

ELT secretary Pam Langve-Davis received approval of the Statewide Impaired Driving Strategic Plan via email from Nanette Gilbertson, of Montana County Attorneys Association prior to the meeting.

Having a quorum to move approval, Director Dorrington called for approval of the Plan. Colonel Sager made a motion to approve the plan, Senator Sara Novak second the motion. The Director called for discussion and there was none and moved to a voice vote. The Director asked for those in favor, and those against via verbal call. The ELT members in attendance all agreed in favor of approving the Statewide Impaired Driving Strategic Plan as written. Motion to approve passed unanimously. Judge Knisely abstained as some of her programs are included in the work plan.

Open Discussion

ELT members discussed safety issues that negatively impact the safety of road users and are contributing factors to fatalities and serious injuries on Montana's roadways. Director Dorrington called out the severity of single vehicle crashes and the leading contributors with the need for a primary seat belt law, strengthening of DUI laws, and a need to focus on distracted driving. Montana is the only state that does not have a hands-free cellphone/electronic device use or texting while driving laws. Additionally, he called out the importance of increasing funding for law enforcement to ensure adequate coverage statewide. He shared his desire that the ELT members would lend support and help promote safety to reduce the lives lost traveling Montana's roads. Senator Novak stated her full support and noted that careless driving behaviors need to be addressed which should include education and communication on acceptable behavior and the lasting impacts of making poor decisions for victims, victim families, friends, emergency responders, and community. Director Dorrington also shared and empathized with first and second responders that they see so much tragedy and trauma on a routine basis, and the need for thoughtful care for these professionals in their careers. Colonel Sager agreed that care for these responders is necessary and then reiterated what the data is telling us about Montana's serious injury and fatal crashes – that impaired driving, lack of seat belts, speeding, and distracted driving are the contributing factors to roadway fatalities and serious injuries. He is a strong supporter of promoting awareness and education of needed strategies and solutions well in advance of the Legislative session. Anna Mhoon shared her concern that she witnesses often is distracted driving. People often call to inquire about getting their license renewed or reinstated. Instead of pulling over they continue to drive while on their cell phones.

Next Meeting

The Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan is undergoing an update and is revisiting strategies and activities at the Annual Transportation Safety Meeting August 13 and 14, 2025 at Carroll College in Helena. This annual meeting serves as an ELT meeting. Agency leaders that serve as ELT members are encouraged to attend and extend the information to staff involved in safety related programs. Subject matter expertise and input for determining strategies and developing an implementation plan is valuable in working towards vision zero- zero fatalities and zero serious injuries on Montana's roadways. Pam Langve-Davis will email the registration link to the ELT members.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM