Safer vehicle occupants

THE CENTER FOR TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

What was a driver doing before he got behind the wheel? What might he do that would complicate the driving task? What judgments and motivations might influence his actions and decisions? By better understanding the driving behaviors that compromise safety, CTS researchers can help to ensure the well-being of all roadway users.

Alcohol / drug-impaired driving
Studying blood alcohol concentration (BAC) testing and reporting standards for fatally injured drivers, and using the resulting measures to facilitate accurate assessments and track progress of impaired driving programs. Additional studies have focused on evaluations of standard field sobriety testing and ignition interlock devices. By analyzing the demographic factors in DWI fatal crashes, researchers can more clearly determine what will be the most effective countermeasures, and related research helps identify and evaluate the most productive educational approaches to drug and alcohol abuse prevention.

Distracted driving
Examining the effect of various distractions on the driving task through actual in-vehicle experience on a test track as well as in simulated environments. By conducting in-house studies tracking research findings from peer institutions, the CTS adds new perspectives to a growing national discussion and helps develop relevant materials for driver education and driving safety courses.

Occupant protection
Observing actual driver use of seat belts and child safety seats. Through observational studies in cities throughout the state, our scientists annually document compliance with occupant protection laws in Texas. Other research could help to shape policy related to seat belts on school buses.

Traffic safety culture
Few additional safety improvements can be expected from engineering or enforcement approaches, so CTS researchers are examining what new solutions can come from changing how people think about driving, or, creating a traffic safety culture.