

## Sharing the Road



Our roads and highways are becoming busier every year, which increases the risk for crashes.

The U.S. Department of Transportation says there are more than **288 million** registered vehicles, driven by about **233 million** licensed drivers. About 14 percent – more than 40 million – are commercial trucks. The roads are also shared by nearly **nine million** motorcycles. And e-bikes are growing in popularity, with more than **one million** on the road today and sales of e-bikes expected to reach 700,000/year in 2025.

That's a lot of traffic. Add to it others who use roads, like bicycle riders, and those who cross roads or walk alongside them – pedestrians.

With so much traffic, drivers have a lot to watch out for. And they need to understand the differences in **sharing**

**the roads** with various other users.

**Sharing the road with trucks**, especially tractor-trailers and tandem trailers, presents particular challenges. Truck drivers have limited visibility and large blind spots where they can't see other vehicles to their sides. They can't maneuver as easily or quickly as cars, and large trucks, which can weigh as much as 40 times the weight of a car, can take the full length of a football field to stop.

Motorcycles, bicycles, e-bikes and scooters present different challenges. When exiting a parked vehicle, for instance, drivers need to look before opening their door to be sure they don't hit a passing cyclist.

Drivers in **rural areas** need to watch for farm equipment on the roads.

School buses require another type of

vigilance. When behind or across from a stopped school bus, drivers need to know they cannot pass if the bus has its lights flashing or a STOP sign extended. And when following any bus, drivers should anticipate that the bus driver will stop any time it is about to cross railroad tracks.

Pedestrians are especially vulnerable road users. Pedestrian fatalities have been increasing in recent years and the latest statistics show 7,318 pedestrians died in traffic crashes in 2023, down slightly from the previous year, which recorded the highest number of pedestrian deaths ever. Drivers need to be vigilant and watch for passengers crossing, whether at a marked crosswalk or not. When making a turn at an intersection, always scan the area to watch for pedestrians and give them the right-of-way so they can cross safely. Don't pass another vehicle that is stopped at a crosswalk.

Use extra caution when driving in a work zone and be prepared to stop for workers or equipment that may enter the roadway.

The National Road Safety Foundation will be putting a focus on sharing the road in the coming year, and we will be posting information and links to help everyone share the road safely.

## Drive Safe Chicago PSA Contest

Teens from Chicagoland and throughout Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Iowa are invited to help promote safe driving by creating a message about sharing the road.

NRSF and the Chicago Auto Show are hosting the 11th annual Drive Safe Chicago PSA Contest. Teens can enter by sending a script or written description of a 30-second television public service announcement that reminds drivers about sharing the road with other vehicles including trucks, and pedestrians, cyclists and others. Entry deadline is Dec. 31, 2024.

Three finalists will be selected to work with an Emmy Award-winning director to transform their ideas into finished TV public service announcements and the public will then be

able to cast votes via the Chicago Auto Show Facebook page. The winner will receive \$2,000 and his or her PSA will debut at the Chicago Auto Show and will air on the nationally-syndicated TV show "Teen Kids News." The first runner-up will receive \$1,500 and the second runner-up gets \$500. The teachers or school advisors of the winner and runners-up will each receive a \$100 gift card.

Information about Drive Safe Chicago, including contest rules and entry form, can be found at [www.nrsf.org/contests/drive-safe-chicago](http://www.nrsf.org/contests/drive-safe-chicago). The site also has past winners' PSAs for viewing.





## Safely Sharing the Road with Trucks

Every day, millions of trucks deliver America's most essential goods. Behind each steering wheel is a professional driver dedicated to service and to safety. There are more than 3.5 million truckers in the country, collectively driving more than 330 billion miles annually.

The road is their shop floor, their office, their production line. Preventing crashes is as important to them as it is to all motorists. This industry values safety as a top priority, and trucking is committed to the goal of zero highway fatalities. That is why we are leading efforts to combat aggressive and distracted driving by all motorists. Avoiding distractions like cellphones or driving while impaired can go a long way to prevent crashes. Follow posted speed limits. Speeding and aggressive driving are leading causes of all highway fatalities.

Every crash is a tragedy, and sadly, there are far too many tragedies on our roads today. Data from FMCSA shows that the majority of truck-involved accidents are caused by the behaviors of passenger vehicle drivers, many of whom are either uninformed about how to drive around large commercial vehicles or are unaware of their surroundings because they are distracted. This is where ATA's premier highway safety program, Share the Road, comes in. With the support of Mack Trucks Inc., the Share the Road program delivers lifesaving safety information to the driving public across America.

These professional drivers, all with millions of accident-free driving miles under their belts, travel coast to coast to talk to motor carriers, safety organizations, schools and the media about how to appropriately operate around large trucks. By following their advice, motorists can do their part to ensure our highways remain safe.

**What do these experts recommend?**  
It's simple:

- **Never cut in front of a truck.** Fully loaded trucks weigh up to 80,000 lbs. and take the length of a football field to stop. Most cars weigh only 3,000 lbs.
- **Don't linger alongside a truck.** There are four large blind spots around trucks where cars disappear and the driver can't see you.

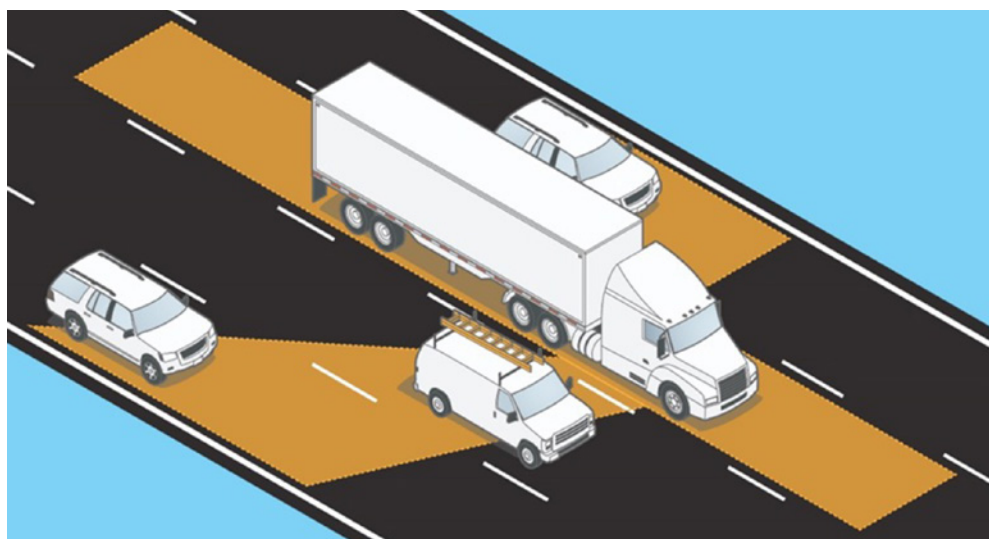
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- **Pass quickly** to resume visibility and change lanes only when you can see both of the truck's headlights in your rear-view mirror.
- **Never pass on the right.** The blind spot on that side of the truck runs the length of the trailer and extends out 3 lanes.

- **Steer clear of front and rear blind spots.** Stay back an absolute minimum of 3 seconds and leave at least 4 car lengths in front of a truck for safety cushions. Following a truck too closely obscures your view, and the driver cannot see cars fewer than 30 feet behind the truck.
- **If you are following a truck** and you cannot see the driver's face in the truck's side mirrors, the truck driver cannot see you.
- **Allow trucks adequate space to maneuver.** They make wide turns at intersections and require additional space.

ATA is a vocal supporter of numerous efforts to improve safety. Those measures include enhanced driver training standards, strong drug and alcohol testing standards and more. Beyond our advocacy, the industry invests \$14 billion in training and technology every year to prevent crashes and improve safety for roadway users. Today's trucks are equipped with advanced safety technologies like automatic emergency braking, lane departure warning systems, forward collision, blind spot warnings and many others. These investments—when paired with mindful, proactive and alert driving by the motoring public—are critical steps towards measurable improvements in safety and reduced crashes.

American Trucking Associations is the largest national trade association for the trucking industry. Through a federation of 50 affiliated state trucking associations and industry-related conferences and councils, ATA is the voice of the industry America depends on to move our nation's freight.



# NRSF-Sponsored Seat Belt Push Brings **72% Increase in Belt Use**

A community-supported campaign to increase seat belt use in Brockton, Mass. has created an astounding **72 percent jump in belt usage**.

NRSF supported this pilot program to help gauge the impact of creating a safety awareness campaign from the grass-roots up, rather than the traditional top-down program. In collaboration with MassDOT and funding from NRSF, Travelers Marketing developed a campaign that involved leaders in this diverse community right from the start.

Following six months of community engagement with community groups, churches and key individuals, a campaign slogan was selected and a media plan was developed to reach the city's diverse population, many who are not English-speakers. The campaign was also integrated into the curriculum in local schools.

Brockton was selected for this test program because it had the lowest seat belt usage rate in the state, which itself has one of the worst belt usage rates in the nation.

At the start of the **"Buckle Up Brockton – Protect Who You Love"** campaign, which launched in May, the observed belt usage rate was 42.2 percent. A post-campaign survey in late August and early September showed the belt usage rate had risen by 72 percent, to 72.6 percent belt usage.

MassDOT is looking to extend the grass-roots campaign concept into other cities in the Bay State, and NRSF is considering supporting it beyond Massachusetts.



# NRSF Teams with **Youthcast Media Group** to Train Future Journalists About **Road Safety Issues**

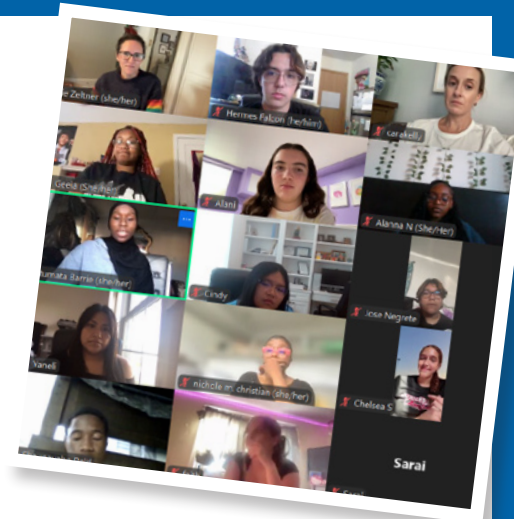
**The National Road Safety Foundation** is partnering with **Youthcast Media Group**, a non-profit organization, to train students with an interest in journalism in road safety issues.

Youthcast, founded by former USA TODAY health and safety reporter Jayne O'Donnell, teaches high school students from under-resourced communities to produce multimedia journalism that highlights solutions to health and safety disparities where they live.

The grant from NRSF will enable Youthcast to conduct a **"reporting and writing bootcamp"** for a dozen students, primarily students of color from major cities like Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, Hartford and Miami, to learn the basics of journalism and news

writing, with a focus on passenger empowerment – encouraging passengers to speak up when in a vehicle being driven unsafely.

The students will develop articles that they will get published in a variety of local and national media outlets. Experienced journalists from major newspapers will mentor them and help with story development and placement.



# NRSF Honors **ADTSEA Driver Ed Teachers of Excellence**

NRSF's David Reich (left) and Michelle Anderson (right) with this year's Teacher of Excellence honorees at the ADTSEA Annual Conference in Albany NY. TEA winners are (from 2nd left) Deborah Fry of Virginia, Jennifer Brown of Illinois, and Gabriella Netsch of Vermont.



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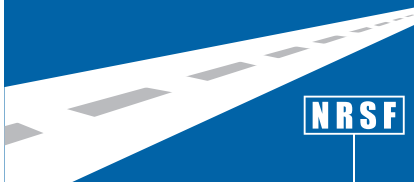
The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that for more than 60 years has been dedicated to reducing crashes, deaths and injuries on our nation's roads and highways by promoting safe driving habits through greater public awareness.

NRSF produces educational programs for broadcast and for use in safety, educational and enforcement programs by police, teachers, traffic safety agencies, healthcare professionals, youth advocacy groups and other grass-roots related agencies, as well as federal, state and local government agencies. NRSF programs, which are free, address distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency, pedestrian safety and passenger empowerment. The Foundation works with youth advocacy groups and sponsors national and regional contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities.

For information and to download free programs, visit [www.nrsf.org](http://www.nrsf.org).



The National Road Safety Foundation



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