

**Remarks Prepared for
Mark Rosekind, Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
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AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Thank you, Bill [Craven] for your kind introduction. I appreciate the opportunity to be with you today and to continue the safety conversation that I began on my very first day at NHTSA, continued last week in Detroit, and plan to keep going throughout my time at the agency. It's a conversation that is essential for continued progress, which at NHTSA, we measure in lives saved and injuries prevented on America's roads.

Last week in Detroit, I had the chance to get a sneak preview of your latest work at the auto show. My focus was on safety innovations and technology and it was great to see the activities and progress on display. Your work is helping to deliver vehicles that are light years ahead of what we were driving only a decade ago. You're not just delivering for your companies; you're delivering safety for America's families.

On a very personal and emotional level, automotive safety advances have afforded many Americans a second chance at life. Just consider how safety innovations have prevented crashes from occurring or helped people to survive vehicle crashes that years ago might have killed or seriously injured. Making America's roadways safer is a shared responsibility and I commend all of you for the critical work accomplished and the efforts underway to make the traveling public safer.

Even as safety advancements have afforded many Americans another chance at life, so much more work remains. In 2013, 32,719 lives were lost on our roadways; this is unacceptable. Whether driving, riding, or walking, we must keep Americans safe on our country's roads. To pursue our safety mission, the team at NHTSA will strengthen what works, fix what doesn't, and ensure that NHTSA is using every tool at its disposal to save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce crashes. With that in mind, let me briefly describe three priorities for the next two years.

First, we must strengthen how NHTSA identifies and recalls vehicles and equipment with safety-related defects. As it stands, resources – including people, technology, and authority – present challenges to NHTSA's efforts in this area. We have to address these issues through multiple mechanisms, such as seeking more people, new technologies, and increased authority.

Recent cases involving GM and Takata demonstrate the vital importance of getting this right. It is NHTSA's responsibility to do everything in our power to prevent deaths and injuries related to defects. The American people expect that of us.

We have a commitment to the families and friends affected by roadway tragedies, and to you, that we will explore every idea, use every authority, employ every tool to prevent such tragedies.

Before I arrived, NHTSA already had launched several initiatives to improve our technology and our processes so we catch more defects sooner. And that work continues.

Our second priority is to strengthen NHTSA's core safety programs. The Agency has some well-established and highly successful campaigns that are household names, such as 'Click It or Ticket,' 'Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over,' and more recently, 'U Text. U Drive. U Pay.' These campaigns are changing attitudes, changing how Americans drive for the better, and saving lives.

The Agency's grant work with states and local governments are a foundation for our safety work across the nation. These partnerships are essential to strengthen laws against drunk and distracted driving, enhance graduated licensing, and efforts that save lives.

Many are unfamiliar with the fact that NHTSA has responsibilities with Emergency Medical Services to improve this lifesaving asset across America.

Secretary Foxx has also made our work on pedestrian and bicycle safety a major priority across the Department, and we're looking toward both traditional and technological approaches that can help reduce these deaths and injuries.

And we cannot forget the role that the Agency plays in advancing fuel efficiency. That work continues as we move forward with efforts on tougher heavy truck fuel economy standards and work to support the goals of the President's Climate Action Plan.

But in all of this, and in many other of our safety programs, I will be asking, 'Where can we innovate and improve upon success? Can we explore new and different ways to keep Americans safe on our roads?' We can never stop that exploration if we are to keep driving down deaths and injuries on our roads. Which brings me to our third priority.

Technology innovations have been critical to saving lives and preventing injuries on our roadways. From the most basic, like a seat belt, to the newest technology, like collision warning and automatic braking systems, these innovations have played a critical role in furthering safety.

Just consider, what life-saving technology innovation is coming next? What might emerge from the discussions held at this meeting? At NHTSA, we are excited about technology and will encourage innovation. We are even more excited to encourage safety. We believe that together, technology innovation and safety represent the greatest value to the traveling public.

So those are three of our priorities for these next two years. NHTSA has a diverse portfolio and we will be looking to progress activities in many areas. And I'll be listening to you and many different groups to explore any ideas and opportunities to advance NHTSA's safety mission. We have an ambitious agenda. But it is achievable. And all of this work will be guided by three principles.

First, effectiveness. NHTSA will look for every opportunity to be more effective. We will use all the tools available to us to achieve our safety mission. We will bring to bear the best ideas, the best processes, and the best people in order to reduce deaths and injuries on our roads. We will pursue any means possible to help us be more effective.

The second principle is communication. Externally, the public needs to know what we do and how we do it. We will build trust by excelling at what we do—and also, by ensuring that the American public understands how we do it. This will translate into transparency wherever possible to provide people with information to help them make safe choices. You will see diverse changes in how we communicate with the public across nearly every NHTSA platform – and we will do so in clear and direct terms that make our technical information understood and accessible. We will apply this communication internally as well, ensuring our goals and activities are communicated across the agency.

Our third guiding principle is innovation. Across the board, we need to look for opportunities to innovate everything we do. ‘That’s how we’ve always done things’ is never an acceptable response. And in areas where NHTSA is already doing something well, then we will constantly be asking ourselves, ‘How can we innovate and be even more effective?’

I very much appreciate the opportunity today to outline our three priorities for the next two years and briefly describe how we will apply three guiding principles to pursue our safety mission.

Finally, as some of you may know, I am third generation San Franciscan, and for twenty years before moving to Washington, DC to serve as a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board, I lived in Silicon Valley. So, it may not be a surprise that I have a great appreciation for all things Apple, especially this phrase . . . ‘and one more thing.’

Today, that ‘one more thing’ is tell you about two technology-related announcements from NHTSA; but as is often the case with new technology, you will have to wait . . . at least until tomorrow, when Secretary Foxx will be here to speak with you. He will be providing specifics then and we look forward to discussing the announcements.

Thank you again for the invitation today. Enjoy the technical sessions and I sincerely hope that you will be engaging in discussions that will lead to the next great, lifesaving breakthroughs in vehicle technology.

Thank you.

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