



Green Lake County Traffic Safety Commission

Who we are

You've noticed a dangerous traffic situation in your community; maybe it's a hazardous intersection or a stretch of highway with lots of speeders. Everyone in Wisconsin has a remarkable team of experts they can turn to for help-their county Traffic Safety Commission (TSC). The purpose of a TSC is to monitor local traffic safety issues and coordinate efforts to address problems.

In 1971, Governor Patrick Lucey signed into law Statute 83.013 which requires each county to have a community-level, multi-disciplinary Traffic Safety Commission. Since then, Wisconsin has been the envy of other states for our grassroots approach to traffic safety. Some states have laws that allow-but do not require-cities or counties to establish similar groups; Iowa, for example, has only a handful of them.

The TSC consists of

- County Members
 - Chief traffic law enforcement officer (or designated representative)
 - Highway safety coordinator (if there is one)
 - Highway commissioner (or designated representative)
- Wisconsin DOT Members
 - An engineer from the regional office
 - Regional Program Manager (RPM) from the DOT Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS)
 - State Patrol trooper/inspector
- Representatives from
 - Education (e.g., driver ed instructor, high school principal)
 - Medicine (e.g., doctor, nurse, EMS provider)
 - Law (e.g., DA's office, municipal prosecutor)

Additional members might include county highway committee members, town board supervisors, civic leaders, safety advocates and the local news media.

What we do

Commissions must meet at least quarterly and state law specifies these duties:

1. Review local crash data and other traffic safety-related matters.
2. Prepare "spot maps" showing crash locations on county and town roads and on city/village streets of places under 5,000 population.
3. For municipalities of 5,000 or more, spot maps aren't required but the TSC must look at the crash data.

Based on their review of this data and reports of citizens' concerns, TSCs can recommend corrective action to DOT, the county board or highway committee, or any other appropriate branch of government. Recommending to government and responding to citizens often takes some gumption. As Jefferson County TSC coordinator Joe Nehmer says, "We tell them what we think, not necessarily what they want to hear."

DOT provides commissions with crash and citation data for rural state and county highways, and the BOTS RPM provides legislative updates and information on traffic safety initiatives and grant funding opportunities.

TSCs can also:

- Ask the State Patrol or local law enforcement to increase patrols in problem areas
- Ask DOT to review possible engineering problems on a state highway, and advise DOT on planned work zones or detour routes
- Review proposals for local traffic safety improvements
- Review fatal or other high-profile crashes. This can be done, for example, via in-squad video or by piling into a bus for a site visit.
- Foster public awareness of traffic safety issues and initiatives (e.g., by working with local news media)
Encourage/sponsor local activities (e.g., bike rodeos, Safe Routes to School campaigns)

(Source Wisconsin Highway Traffic Safety Coordinators Association", May, 2008)