



**Washington State Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2019: Safe Systems Approach**  
*Learn More - Page 192 of the Plan*

**Challenge: It is time for Washington to adopt the Safe Systems principles statewide in its policies, programs, projects, activities, and investments.**

The Safe Systems approach for infrastructure provides Washington State with the opportunity to address increases in fatalities and serious injuries by changing how the different disciplines work together. This includes:

- How agencies plan, design, operate, and maintain the transportation system
- The focus and intent of education
- Enforcement

Safe Systems has been implemented across a number of countries and has proven successful in reducing fatalities and serious injuries. At its core, it includes four main components:

- Speed
- Infrastructure
- Vehicles
- Users

Some agencies add post-crash care (EMS) as part of the approach. For Target Zero, Safe Systems represents a multidisciplinary approach to reduce the potential for fatalities or serious injuries, or reduce the severity of a crash if one does occur.

**Strategies and Objectives for Positive Change:**

The Washington State Department of Transportation has convened a work group including state, local, and tribal partners to develop a speed management policy and guidelines focused on:

- Injury minimization
- Lower operating speeds on state routes, city streets, county roads, and tribal roads based on context and compatible with the needs of all types of users

Key factors to consider when setting operating speeds include high densities of older adults, transit users, youth, people who walk or ride bicycles — particularly those who are most reliant on active transportation and transit due to income or disability — and land use.

Once this work group develops a speed management policy, traffic safety professionals should pursue education at all jurisdictional levels and associated strategies in engineering, education, and enforcement.



**What You Can Do:**

- Support and report on development of city and county road safety plans based in principles of systematic safety – see page 203
- Develop and disseminate systematic safety data analyses by jurisdiction to provide context for crash rates, severity, contributing factors, and proven countermeasures
- Conduct demographic analysis to identify communities of concern
- Support increased investment in infrastructure in historically underserved areas where crash rates and severity are disproportionate to local and regional rates