# Performance- 2012 *draft 5-30-13*

## Improvement Status

Fatal accidents have decreased by approximately 21 percent from 2006 to 2011. In 2011 there were 90 highway fatalities, the lowest number since the early sixties. A national data comparison shows that New Hampshire is ranked 7th in the lowest number of crashes per capita in the nation in 2011. Fatalities and serious injury crashes are decreasing due in part to engineering enhancements such as paving roadway shoulders, improving guardrail, installing rumble strips, enhancing delineation, and making intersection safety improvements. Public education and increased law enforcement participation in statewide campaigns have also contributed to this decline. This year, the five year running average was at 114 deaths, surpassing the projection of 118 for 2012.

One of the critical emphasis areas for the Department has been to address run-off-the-road crashes. Run-of-the-road crashes account for 53% of all fatalities on NH roadways. NHDOT has implemented various safety initiatives over the years to reduce run-off -the-road crashes. They include:

- **Shoulder rumble strips** - NHDOT installed 1260 miles of shoulder rumble strips since 2000.
- **Centerline rumble strips** - NHDOT installed 80 miles of centerline rumble strips since 2004. Both forms of rumble strips notify drivers that they are leaving their lane through sound and vibration.
- **Median barrier** - In 2012 the NHDOT installed approximately 5.8 miles of median barrier. The total installed median barrier since 2009 is approximately 25.8 miles (136,350LF). These barriers were placed in locations with a median widths of 50 feet or less in response to updated criteria and to reduce the potential for head-on collisions along divided highways.
- **Warning sign improvement solutions that address run-off-the-road crashes** - NHDOT works closely with towns to develop proposals for low-cost solutions that aim to address as many miles of the roadway system as possible with the funds available. This risk-based approach acknowledges that fatal and serious injury crashes tend to be more

## Improve System Safety and Security

### Highway Fatalities (Five Year Moving Average - Goal Towards Zero Deaths)

***Purpose:***

This performance measure tracks annual trends in fatalities resulting from traffic crashes on all New Hampshire roadways. The traffic crash data drives the development and focus of New Hampshire's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The SHSP is intended to clearly identify the State's critical safety needs and provide strategies to achieve significant reductions in fatalities and serious injury crashes on all public roads. This in turn guides the Department's investment of highway safety funds to focus on areas that achieve a significant benefit in safety for every dollar expended on infrastructure safety improvements. In addition, this data supports New Hampshire's Toward Zero Deaths initiative, which is a part of the SHSP, with a focus on measures to address the behavioral factors involved in traffic crashes. The SHSP has set a goal of reducing highway fatalities by 50% by 2030.

***Data:***

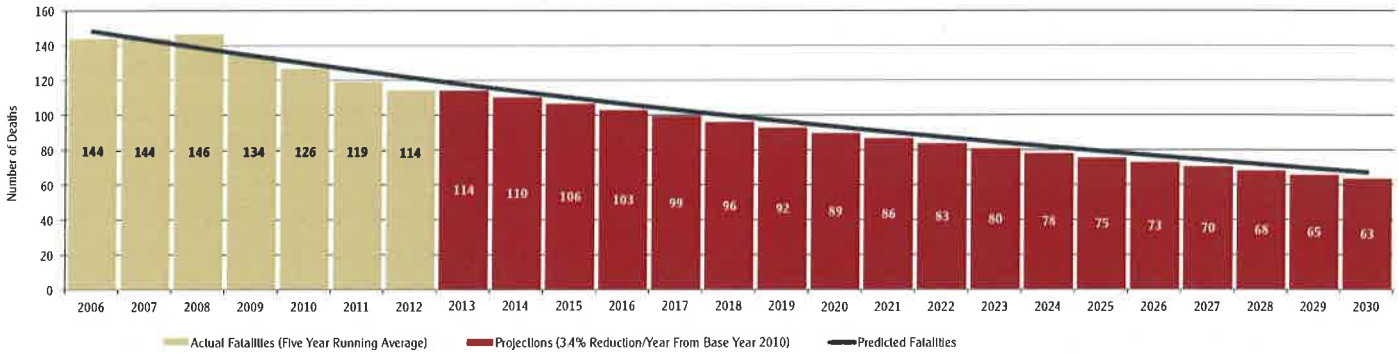
The New Hampshire Department of Safety receives crash record reports from state and local law enforcement as well as citizens. They enter each report into a crash database and deliver the results to the Department of Transportation annually on a calendar year basis. The Department of Transportation locates each crash on the state Geographic Information System (GIS) routes layer and analyzes the crashes to identify locations with the greatest promise for safety improvement.

This performance measure is based on a five (5) year moving average of the number of traffic fatalities, as each year the number of crashes can fluctuate significantly, and there is the need to determine a trend in crashes to evaluate if safety measures are making a difference.

random in nature on town roads. This year NHDOT implemented improvements on local roads in eight (8) towns, targeting warning signs on horizontal curves, object markers and other warning signs and delineation.

- **Pavement safety edge testing** - During the 2011 construction season, NHDOT installed a new pavement edge treatment that can help errant vehicles safely reenter the roadway. When vehicles leave the roadway where the pavement drops off steeply, drivers may overcorrect when reentering the roadway. The overcorrection may lead to the vehicle swerving into oncoming traffic or rolling over. The safety edge treatment is intended to address the sharp drop off. Studies in other states have found that the implementation of the pavement safety edge has minimal impact on project cost.

The NHDOT is also aware that some crashes are a result of other factors including behavioral aspects. In 2012 the Department and its safety partners including federal, state, local agencies, planning commissions, the private sector, and concerned citizens met to update the State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) in a collaborative effort to identify safety goals and strategies to reduce fatal crashes and serious injuries on New Hampshire's roads. This effort is focused on changing the driving culture in New Hampshire to have everyone accept personal responsibility for traveling safely and not think of fatal crashes as acceptable. Under the SHSP efforts, the "Driving Toward Zero Deaths" branding was established which resulted in public service announcements, TV show interviews, conferences, attendance at major public events in an effort spread the message and change the culture.

- **Summary** - The goal for this performance measure is to reduce fatal crashes by 50 % over the next twenty years. This will require continued investment in infrastructure safety improvements both in spot location improvements and systemic improvements. In addition to the infrastructure improvements, the NHDOT is also investing a portion of its safety funding toward the behavioral side of crashes, looking at ways for outreach and education to bring awareness to the driving public

NH Traffic Fatalities: Trends, Forecasts and Goals