

24 States Fail Segments Of DOT 'Report Card'

In its annual evaluation of state safety programs the Department of Transportation has found that 24 states are still failing to comply with one or more of the federal government's 16 highway safety program standards. Last year's evaluation listed only 19 states that were "failing to demonstrate acceptable progress" in one or more of the federally assisted program areas.

Transportation Secretary John A. Volpe said in a letter to the governor of each state that "several states have made little or no progress" toward implementing many of the standards' provisions. "Even where the required statutes exist, there are instances where effective implementation has not been aggressively pursued," Volpe said. He pointed out that "since passage of the Highway Safety Act of 1966, Congress has appropriated almost \$300 million" to aid states in implementing the 16 federal standards. However, he noted, "No state has taken all legislative and administrative actions needed to fully implement the standards."

In his criticism of some states' efforts Volpe pointed out: "Five years after issuance of the standards, only 13 states are implementing pedestrian child protection programs in at least two-thirds of the local jurisdictions. Thirty-three of the states and the District of Columbia still do not have a classified driver license; nine states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico do not have a presumptive intoxication level of 0.10; and twelve states do not have satisfactory motorcycle helmet laws. Also, although 43 states identify high accident locations on their state highways, only thirty states are implementing corrective action at these locations on at least two-thirds of the state highway systems."

Volpe's letter failed to mention that under present law he is authorized to withhold 10 per cent of a state's federal-aid highway construction funds if the state is not implementing an approved highway safety program. Such action has never been taken. However, in at least five cases it is known that DOT has made thinly veiled threats to withhold funds in order to secure certain highway safety measures.

Editor's Note

This issue of Status Report is devoted entirely to the Department of Transportation's evaluation of state efforts to implement the 16 National Highway Safety Standards. See inside for state-by-state "report card."

A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration official attributes the apparent decrease in compliance to changes in the methods used to grade the state efforts. Last year's evaluation was based on "old data" and "a lot of promises," he said. However, the current evaluation required that a state "have legislation passed" before it is credited with implementation of a standard.

This year's "report cards" also differ from those of previous years in that a state is

not labelled as “failing” when it has not implemented a standard. In the current evaluation, a state is rated “above average,” “average” or “below average,” according to a numerical score it receives. To arrive at that score the safety administration assigned numerical values to each element of the 16 standards. A state received points for the standard elements that it has implemented. Full compliance with a standard is worth 100 points.

The “report card” grades ranged from a low of 739 for Alabama to a high of 1485 for Virginia. (See chart for scores received by all states.) According to DOT’s score sheet, Alabama is complying with none of the provisions of standards governing motor vehicle inspection, driver licensing and debris hazard control and cleanup. Virginia is shown as being in full compliance with standards on motor vehicle inspection, motor vehicle registration, motorcycle safety, codes and laws, emergency medical services and debris hazard control and cleanup.

The evaluation also shows that, in addition to Alabama, 23 states are considered to be in total non-compliance with one or more standards.

- Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Tennessee, Washington and Wisconsin have no acceptable program for motor vehicle inspection.

- Kansas has not adopted provisions of the motorcycle safety standard.

- California, Massachusetts and Vermont do not comply with any portion of the standard on codes and laws.

- Mississippi has not adopted any provisions of the standard on traffic courts.

- Arkansas, Indiana, Puerto Rico and West Virginia lack federally approved emergency medical service programs.

- Indiana, Louisiana and Vermont have not implemented provisions of the debris hazard control and removal standard.

The evaluation shows also that *no* state has fully implemented provisions of standards on identification and surveillance of accident locations, highway design, construction and maintenance, traffic control devices, pedestrian safety and police traffic services. Each of the remaining standards is being implemented fully by one or more states.

Of the five standards not being fully implemented by any state, the first three and part of the fourth are the responsibility of the Federal Highway Administration. All other standards—including those being fully implemented in one or more states—are the responsibility of the safety administration.

STATE REACTIONS

So far, state reactions to the evaluation have been favorable compared to last year’s reactions when some states labelled the “report card” evaluation “unfair” and “biased.”

Alabama Safety Coordinator Robert T. Simpson said in his reply to the evaluation, “We are acutely aware of the slow progress we have made toward legislative and administrative tools necessary to effectively implement the national standards.” Simpson said that Alabama plans to “concentrate on four of the standards: periodic motor vehicle inspection, motor vehicle registration, driver licensing and traffic courts,” but added that “it is not (our) intent to ignore the implementation of other standards.” He said that his state “will make every effort” to be placed “in the ‘above average’ group of states at the earliest possible time.”

STANDARD	ABOVE AVERAGE											
	V.a.	N.H.	Del.	S.D.	Me.	Colo.	D.C.	Mass.	Utah	N.Y.	Mich.	Calif.
Periodic Motor Vehicle Inspection (301)	100	100	88	100	88	88	100	85	88	100	50	50
Motor Vehicle Registration (302)	100	100	82	100	100	96	82	100	100	100	100	96
Motorcycle Safety (303)	100	100	100	100	95	100	100	100	50	100	90	45
Driver Education (304)	85	100	90	90	90	70	90	100	100	85	90	100
Driver Licensing (305)	94	89	82	68	83	72	72	79	98	89	84	99
Codes and Laws (306)	100	100	100	100	100	100	80	0	100	100	100	0
Traffic Courts (307)	80	90	100	70	100	90	100	100	80	90	70	90
Alcohol Safety (308)	80	95	100	80	80	95	50	75	95	95	95	95
Identification & Surveillance of Accident Locations (309)	87	61	91	67	49	75	90	83	66	36	61	77
Traffic Records (310)	99	81	74	73	100	80	81	81	81	81	100	99
Emergency Medical Services (311)	100	75	75	100	85	60	45	75	50	25	25	55
Highway Design, Construction & Maintenance (312)	83	61	66	65	53	73	77	63	70	64	68	82
Traffic Control Devices (313)	92	90	86	63	62	74	78	63	34	65	66	90
Pedestrian Safety (314)	90	84	81	77	66	57	91	86	71	74	84	85
Police Traffic Services (315)	95	79	72	83	74	92	52	91	79	76	95	92
Debris Hazard Control & Cleanup (316)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	80	80	100
TOTALS	1485	1405	1387	1336	1325	1322	1288	1281	1262	1260	1258	1255

AVERAGE

Penn.	Idaho	Md.	Ohio	N.J.	Ariz.	Minn.	Ore.	Wash.	S.C.	Wisc.	N.C.	Conn.	Ill.	Mont.	Tex.	Mo.	Tenn.	R.I.	Hawaii	N.M.
88	88	0	41	93	0	0	44	0	98	0	88	0	0	0	87	100	0	88	88	84
100	87	100	100	100	96	96	100	100	69	100	100	96	73	69	96	100	100	100	82	96
95	65	90	90	100	90	85	75	90	100	90	70	90	40	60	85	85	90	100	100	65
100	100	100	90	75	73	97	75	100	100	100	100	86	100	90	75	80	90	53	75	100
52	77	69	51	53	92	90	53	88	73	73	85	59	60	80	75	67	55	81	87	65
80	100	100	20	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	20	100	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	100
70	100	100	90	90	100	60	70	55	70	60	90	100	100	70	60	75	60	90	80	80
95	75	75	95	75	95	100	100	95	80	75	95	95	90	100	80	60	95	80	100	80
68	59	55	65	36	54	57	78	89	50	58	76	60	64	56	54	54	48	49	21	49
100	65	100	100	81	66	81	81	86	69	81	100	81	81	57	81	81	86	73	71	67
35	25	65	100	30	90	65	35	45	40	50	45	25	90	100	60	25	10	60	10	55
78	68	53	62	60	58	78	75	75	67	67	67	53	65	63	63	52	62	56	38	35
58	54	68	62	74	62	75	77	62	49	82	70	71	67	67	58	43	74	50	57	39
57	77	79	77	64	68	85	69	57	69	57	45	71	81	73	49	78	61	29	56	68
78	95	79	76	84	90	97	97	72	82	73	72	75	89	92	75	81	62	24	44	24
100	100	100	100	95	72	40	75	55	50	100	40	100	60	80	50	80	100	58	80	80
1254	1235	1233	1219	1210	1206	1206	1204	1169	1166	1166	1163	1162	1160	1157	1148	1141	1093	1091	1089	1087

BELOW AVERAGE

Okla.	Fla.	La.	Vt.	Ark.	Neb.	Ky.	Nev.	Wyo.	Ga.	P.R.	N.D.	Ind.	W.Va.	Iowa	Miss.	Kan.	Alaska	Ala.
88	100	88	100	88	88	88	0	88	100	80	0	88	88	0	78	0	0	0
73	50	100	100	96	69	69	96	50	100	96	87	100	69	50	49	50	61	82
55	75	100	100	75	40	100	90	10	75	75	85	70	75	40	15	0	65	90
90	75	75	90	60	75	100	100	86	80	11	65	46	85	90	70	90	43	44
50	65	100	46	54	66	54	80	59	42	42	63	83	37	63	48	49	46	43
100	100	100	0	100	100	80	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	80	0
60	80	40	80	80	40	25	45	70	25	100	60	50	50	35	0	70	80	25
60	80	95	100	100	80	100	100	75	95	75	100	80	80	70	65	55	75	80
66	64	39	55	34	41	33	36	47	50	54	40	22	30	33	50	22	46	51
67	57	81	81	74	62	84	80	53	69	63	71	81	68	53	68	57	56	76
40	25	25	35	0	35	70	45	35	25	0	65	0	0	20	35	15	15	50
49	66	41	61	41	53	53	43	71	60	43	43	71	46	59	45	49	46	43
68	63	50	62	20	40	53	26	70	59	73	55	71	45	62	50	50	42	45
52	80	35	70	60	73	53	75	78	61	59	31	52	41	66	69	58	33	40
97	68	82	60	84	71	60	64	45	44	75	80	24	30	92	19	97	26	70
59	10	0	0	70	100	10	30	70	10	40	8	0	40	50	100	64	45	0
1074	1058	1051	1040	1036	1033	1032	1010	1007	995	986	953	938	884	883	861	826	759	739

Alabama also ranked lowest of all the states in last year's evaluation. However, at that time the state's safety coordinator, Richard Payson, called the report "biased" and said the state "could implement many of the federal requirements if funds were available. . ." from DOT.

Texas Governor Preston Smith wrote Volpe that the report "represents a fair evaluation of the degree of our state's compliance. Indeed, it is based on current data and not on obsolete information such as the unfortunate initial 'report card' issuance in 1970." He said that the evaluation will be "useful in approaching the Texas legislature with our need for bringing about complete compliance." Last year Smith termed the evaluation "very unfortunate" and wrote that the safety administration "is either grossly unaware of the implementation in Texas regarding these standards. . .or else you have been badly misinformed as to the work which has been going on" in Texas.

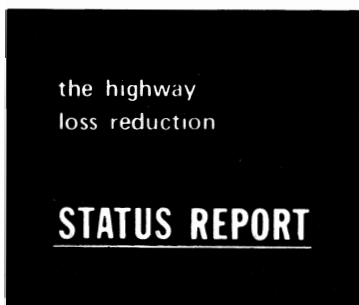
New Hampshire's Governor Walter Peterson, whose state rated "above average," wrote Volpe that he is "gratified that our efforts. . .are recognized. However, we have no inclination to 'sit on our laurels.' New Hampshire suffered a 20 per cent increase in highway fatalities in 1971; and until we begin to reduce this tragic toll, we will continue to regard our efforts as simply not enough." DOT "gives us an 'A' for effort, but we want an 'A' in conduct," Peterson added.

California's Governor Ronald Reagan responded by saying his state is either "reviewing" or working to change some of the areas in which it was downgraded in the evaluation.

Arizona and Nevada are the only states, so far, to question the current evaluation. Nevada's Highway Safety Coordinator, John B. McSweeney, told Volpe that "we were not awarded points, or were 'short changed' points, in certain areas." He said, "I fail to understand how we can move faster at our present level of funding. . .Nevada is to receive less funds for fiscal year 1973 than in fiscal year 1972." His state had requested \$500,000, he said, but "projects had to be cut back to equal the \$339,000 we will receive."

Arizona Governor Jack Williams said in a letter to Volpe that he is "not sure why" his state received less than maximum scores for implementation of the motorcycle and alcohol safety standards. He said that his state "has passed not only the presumptive intoxication level of 0.10 but also implied consent" and "we do have the motorcycle helmet laws" required by the standard.

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