



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Highway  
Administration**

# Memorandum

## **SP-97-009-RR**

Subject Traffic Enforcement

From Director, Office of Motor Carrier Safety and  
Technology

To Regional Directors, Office of Motor Carriers  
Regions 1-10  
THRU: Clinton O. Magby, II  
Director, Office of Motor Carrier  
Field Operations (HFO-1)

Date June 20, 1997 (stamped)

Reply to  
Attn of HSA-30

Traffic enforcement has been an integral part of the MCSAP program since the implementation of ISTEA. Congress has earmarked a portion of MCSAP funds each year to be devoted to this activity and last fiscal year directed OMC to prepare a report outlining its effect on commercial vehicle safety. In attempting to prepare the report, it became evident that the data being collected were inadequate to determine effectiveness.

Traffic enforcement is many things to many people, and we found that the activities being reported were very inconsistent. Some States were not reporting these activities at all, primarily because of problems converting State violations to Federal violations and similar systems problems. Traffic enforcement is defined, for MCSAP purposes, in the instructions for completing Quarterly Reports, but no other policy has ever been issued. Traffic enforcement activities were intended to address those violations which are generally recognized as the leading causes or contributing factors to CMV crashes. These activities are defined as "inspections conducted after the driver is stopped because of a traffic related violation such as speeding (392.2S); following too close (392.2F); improper lane change (392.2L) and reckless driving (392.2R)." SAFETYNET codes, in parenthesis above, were developed so that these inspections could be identified and analyzed. However, we have discovered that many times the trooper or inspector uses the General regulatory code, 392.2, for all traffic violations, which, as you know, is the regulatory code for violation of laws, regulations or ordinances of the jurisdiction in which the vehicle is being operated, unless a Federal regulation sets a higher standard. This means that any violation of a local ordinance can be making it virtually impossible to determine from analysis of SAFETYNET data what impact traffic enforcement, as originally defined, is having on safety.

Most of the performance-based pilot Commercial Vehicle Safety Plans (CVSP) identified traffic enforcement activities as one activity to be employed to address the State's CMV safety problems. It is anticipated that most of the rest of the States will integrate this activity into their FY 98 CVSPs. In order to ensure uniform consistent data which can be used to determine effectiveness of the activity for the benefit of the States as well as OMC, it is necessary to define what will be considered traffic enforcement for MCSAP purposes. This does not mean that traffic enforcement is limited to the following violations, but that these will be the violation codes used

for analysis or enforcement activities. Therefore, it is vital that enforcement officers not use the general code when there is a specific code available. Beginning on October 1, 1997 only the following codes will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of traffic enforcement activities for MCSAP purposes:

- 392.2(S) - Speeding
- 392.2(FC) - Following too close
- 392.2(LC) - Improper lane change
- 393.2(R) - Reckless driving

Other traffic enforcement violations will be periodically examined, using SAFETYNET and other available data, to determine whether they should be added to this list. Currently, even with the limited data available, speeding initiated about 50% of all traffic enforcement inspections with the other three violations distributed over the remaining 50%

Please share this information with all of your State MCSAP inspection agencies, and work with them to monitor how these violations are being recorded on inspection forms. This will help ensure quality information and allow for meaningful evaluation of commercial motor vehicle traffic enforcement activity. If you have any questions, contact Linda Taylor, 202-366-6308.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rose A. McMurray". Below the signature, the word "for" is written in a smaller, less legible cursive script.

Rose A. McMurray