



**Washington State Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2019: Traffic Safety Culture**  
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**Challenge: Washington has a strong traffic safety culture, but we need to leverage this to impact the smaller group of individuals who are still engaged in risky road behaviors.**

In Washington, we have many indicators of a strong traffic safety culture:

- Our seat belt use rate is one of the best in the nation at 93 percent
- Most people (78 percent) do not drive after drinking
- Most people (85 percent) do not drive after using cannabis
- Most drivers (91 percent) keep their focus on the road

To build on this positive trend, we must seek allies who can influence those risky road users. Family members, friends, teachers, coaches, coworkers, bosses, health professionals, law enforcement officers, community leaders, and legislators can all help shape an individual's beliefs and attitudes.

**Strategies and Objectives for Positive Change:**

In Washington, we are building proactive traffic safety culture strategies to reduce high-risk driver behavior categories such as impaired driving, distracted driving, and unrestrained passengers. These include:

- Developing research methods to gather accurate data about beliefs and attitudes of Washingtonians, and using that information to understand how those beliefs and attitudes influence behaviors
- Developing a shared language and understanding about traffic safety culture among Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) staff, Target Zero Managers, and Target Zero partners
- Changing the way we talk about traffic safety to grow our existing positive traffic safety culture
- Forming new partnerships to reinforce pro-active traffic safety rules within families, schools, businesses, agencies, and governments

**What You Can Do:**

- Review examples of proactive traffic safety behaviors for distracted driving – see page 30. These contain action steps people can use to be a part of the solution, for example:
  - Follow the law: no cell phone use while driving
  - Go beyond the law: no hands-free cell phone use while driving
  - Encourage others to put their phone away while driving
  - Avoid conversations or conference calls with people who are driving



- Talk about and make rules about cell phone use and other distractions while driving
  
- Consider culture change as a new and powerful approach to traffic safety, and to employ cultural change strategies along with the more traditional educational strategies.
  - For an example of a culture-oriented educational campaign, please see the Driving Under the Influence of Cannabis and Alcohol (DUICA) at [www.wtscpartners.com/culture](http://www.wtscpartners.com/culture) .
  
- Future materials will become available on the Center for Health and Safety Culture (CHSC ) website at <https://chsculture.org/>.