



## Media Alert

### Denver hosting nation's largest traffic safety conference *Interviews available with national and local experts at 2024 Lifesavers Conference*

**Statewide** – Denver will host the nation's largest gathering of leaders and advocates in traffic safety at the [2024 Lifesavers Conference](#) from April 7-9. The conference will welcome almost 2,000 professionals from federal, state and local government, law enforcement, public health, injury prevention, advocacy and nonprofit organizations across the country to exchange ideas and strategies to reduce preventable injuries and deaths on roadways.

More than 80 workshops and 90 exhibitors will present information about best practices in a variety of topic areas including child passenger safety, distracted driving, impaired driving, occupant protection and pedestrian/bicycle safety.

National speakers at the conference include:

- Shailen Bhatt, Administrator, Federal Highway Administration
- Sophie Shulman, Deputy Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- Dr. David Harkey, President, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety
- Torine Creppy, President of Safe Kids Worldwide and Lifesavers Board Member.
- Capt. Holly Billie (Ret.) - retired federal employee and current Tribal Injury Prevention Advocate

Colorado-based speakers at the conference include:

- Col. Matthew Packard, Chief of the Colorado State Patrol
- Shoshana Lew, Executive Director of CDOT
- Emily Kleinfelter, Safety/Regional Vision Zero Planner, Denver Regional Council of Government

**What:** Access to safety experts at the [2024 Lifesavers Conference on Roadway Safety](#)

**When:** April 7-9, 2024

**Where:** [Colorado Convention Center](#)  
700 14<sup>th</sup> St.  
Denver, CO 80202  
(Registration and information desk will be located in Lobby C, on the 3rd Floor)

**Why:** Amid a decade-long surge in traffic deaths, the Lifesavers Conference brings together leaders and stakeholders from the traffic safety movement to learn about the latest highway safety research, best practices and initiatives; and to explore innovative technology and strategies used to combat risky driving behaviors and save lives.

The conference covers many topics relevant to the Centennial State including speeding, impaired driving, seat belt use and the [Safe System Approach](#). As the host state, Colorado is proud to champion the Safe System Approach with their [Advancing Transportation Plan](#).

**Who:** Experts from the following fields may be available for interviews, including: Vehicle technology, implementing a Safe System to protect all road users, safer road design, pedestrian and cyclist safety, and others.

Please reach out to Sam Cole at CDOT (303-859-1304) and Russ Rader (202-257-3591) for contact information for interviews on the topics above (and below). Note that the conference overlaps with Denver's Auto Show in the same venue on April 6-7, giving the opportunity for reporters to see the latest safety technology on display.

- **Pedestrian Safety/Vulnerable Road Users**

According to CDOT data, pedestrian fatalities soared to a record high in 2023, [representing 18.6% of Colorado's total roadway deaths](#). CDOT is actively investing in infrastructure and communication projects to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility.

- **Distracted Driving**

April marks Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and according to CDOT, distracted driving results in more than 15,000 crashes a year. CDOT's 2023 Driver Behavior Survey found that 76% of Colorado drivers reported using their phone (hands-free or handheld) while driving, up from 67% in 2022. There is also pending legislation on this topic at the State Capitol.

- **Seat Belts**

Colorado's *Click It or Ticket* enforcement period is happening now (April 1-14). As of 2023, 88% of Coloradans buckle up – the highest use rate observed in the past 10 years, according to the Colorado Statewide Seat Belt Survey. In 2023, there were 223 unbuckled vehicle occupant fatalities, an 8% decrease from 2022.

- **Marijuana - Special Colorado Panel Presentation**

CDOT has worked for nearly a decade to educate the public about the dangers of cannabis-impaired driving and driving under the influence of alcohol in combination with other drugs. From a recent CDOT survey, 37% of drivers 16-24 years old who are cannabis consumers believe you can drive safely while high. At the conference, CDOT will host a panel of experts from the CDOT traffic safety office, Native Roots Cannabis Co., and MADD to discuss how partnerships play a crucial role in reaching and convincing cannabis consumers to never drive high.

- **Tribal Nation Outreach - Special Colorado Panel Presentation**

According to the Tribal Injury Prevention Resource Center, unintentional injuries continue to be one of the leading causes of death for American Indians, ages 1 to 54, with 35% of unintentional deaths due to motor vehicle-related injuries, which are preventable. For many years, Tribal communities in Colorado and Wyoming have partnered successfully with the state's Departments of Transportation to put motor vehicle injury prevention and messaging strategies into action. Tribal members representing the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (CO) and the Wind River Reservation (WY) will join their respective DOT associates for a panel discussion addressing challenges, disparities, and solutions for reducing roadway injuries and fatalities on our nation's Reservations. By highlighting these efforts, we hope to draw attention to the opportunities and complexities facing Tribal nations in establishing, implementing, and enforcing public health law.

- **Advanced Technology in Cars**

New technology in the automotive industry opens new opportunities – and challenges. The Lifesavers Conference aims to address these changes through education, advocacy, and training. The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), in partnership with the Emergency Responder Safety Institute (ERSI) and Waymo, is offering emergency responders a free training program on automated vehicle technology.

- According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), equipping all cars with drunk driving prevention technology [would save more than 10,000 lives a year](#). MADD has [urged federal regulators](#) to take swift action to set a rule for impaired driving prevention technology on all new cars.

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