



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Memorandum

Subject: **INFORMATION:** FHWA Wildlife Vehicle
Collision (WVC) Reduction Study Training Course

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In Reply Refer To: HEPE

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To: Directors of Field Services
Federal Lands Highway Division Engineers
Division Administrators

The Office of Safety and the Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty wish to announce the availability of the FHWA Wildlife Vehicle Collision (WVC) Reduction Study Training Course. This course was developed by the Office of Safety Research and Development, the Office of Project Development and Environmental Review, and the Office of Federal Lands. The web-based course is now available at: <http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/WVCtraining/index.asp>.

This training is based on the findings of the Wildlife Vehicle Collision Reduction Study: Report to Congress which is available at: <http://www.tfhr.gov/safety/pubs/08034/index.htm> and the Best Practices Manual developed from that study. The Manual, which is the textbook for the course, may be accessed at : <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/hconnect/wvc/index.htm>. The Report to Congress, Best Practices Manual, and the Web-based course were developed in collaboration with representatives from State DOT(s), other federal agencies, and experts in the field of Wildlife Vehicle Collisions. This collaborative effort resulted in a thorough and in-depth process to identify WVC problem areas and habitat connectivity opportunities, and to evaluate effective mitigation strategies that can be implemented to reduce WVCs. The course covers a wide variety of these strategies such as wildlife fencing, animal detection systems and vegetation management in great detail.

This web based course and the information it contains is particularly important at this time. The Congressional WVC study estimated that one to two million collisions between cars and large animals occur every year in the U.S. This presents a real danger to human safety as well as wildlife survival.



Though human injuries and fatalities as a result of WVCs are relatively rare, they do occur and are a serious consequence of WVCs. More common impacts for drivers and their passengers are vehicle damage, secondary motor vehicle crashes, emotional trauma, and less direct impacts such as travel delays. WVCs can also require the assistance of law enforcement personnel, emergency services, and road maintenance crews for potential repairs and carcass removal. For animals, WVCs present an immediate danger to their individual survival, and further reduce the population survival probability of certain threatened and endangered species.

The information presented in the Study, Manual and course is a useful tool in evaluating the need to accommodate wildlife collision mitigation strategies and connectivity needs during the environmental review process, regardless of the class of action of the environmental document. In addition to Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements, many Divisions and State DOTs have incorporated this consideration of wildlife and safety needs into their Categorical Exclusion and other documentation checklists. We encourage all divisions to adopt this practice since early consideration can result in project design features that decrease wildlife mortality and increase safety for vehicle drivers and passengers. In addition to the information resources outlined above, many states have collaborated with non-governmental organizations to develop regional and local information regarding wildlife corridors and connectivity priorities. We have attached a summary prepared by the Western Environmental Law Center of some of these studies and tools.

We are planning an informational webinar in the near future to highlight the features of the course. Logistical information for the webinar will be sent by separate email in the coming weeks. If you have any questions related to this effort please contact Mary Gray at mary.gray@dot.gov, or by phone at by at 360-753-9487 or Dennis Durbin at 202-366-2066, dennis.durbin@dot.gov, in the Office of Project Development and Environmental Review or Carol Tan at 202-493-3315, carol.tan@fhwa.dot.gov in the Office of Safety Research and Development.