PUTTING THE BRAKES ON AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

BACKGROUND
More than 60 percent of motorists across the country see unsafe driving as a serious threat to themselves and their families. According to national reports, aggressive driving threatens motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike. The threats come from speeding, following too closely, changing lanes frequently without signaling, flashing lights, driving on shoulders to pass, driving across marked barriers, and angry shouting or gesturing at other drivers.

Aggressive drivers also tend to be high-risk drivers. They are more likely to ride unrestrained by seat belts and more likely to drink and drive. Aggressive driving is a major contributor to traffic crashes in Hawaii. On average, from 2001 to 2005, aggressive driving contributed to 60 traffic fatalities in Hawaii each year. Nearly half (43 percent) of all fatal traffic crashes in Hawaii involved aggressive driving. Each year in Hawaii there were more than 1,700 major non-fatal crashes and injuries that involved aggressive driving, or nearly five crashes each day. Aggressive drivers involved in non-fatal crashes had a similar profile to those involved in fatal crashes: younger, male, less likely to use seat belts, and more likely to use alcohol or drugs.

FIGURE 4

In 2006, 67 fatal crashes in Hawaii involved speed as a factor, resulting in 77 of 144 total traffic fatalities, or 53 percent. Speed is the leading factor in Hawaii traffic fatalities.
LEGISLATION AND FUNDING

- Define aggressive driving and seek more stringent penalties and driving restrictions to deter and curb aggressive driving.
- Expand proof of financial responsibility requirement for persons convicted of reckless driving to provide stiffer penalties and deter reckless driving.
- Allow use of the boot to immobilize offenders’ vehicles on the owner’s property to eliminate the cost of impounding vehicles.
- Enact legislation enabling counties to implement a photo enforcement program.
- Enact legislation that earmarks traffic citation fines to the counties specifically for traffic enforcement.
- Continue to seek federal assistance to support anti-speeding enforcement programs.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ACTION

- Research and apply educational best practices conducive to Hawaii.
- Develop educational programs to create awareness of aggressive driving, and related fines and penalties.
- Increase participation in and effectiveness of the Hawaii graduated driver’s education program with greater emphasis on behavior and attitude issues.
- Continue the Shattered Dreams project that targets high-risk youths using a simulated DUI crash scene at high schools.

ENFORCEMENT

- Encourage police departments to establish aggressive driving as an enforcement priority.
- Support police departments when it comes to providing clear guidance on departmental priorities.

ENGINEERING

- Improve traffic flow by using Intelligent Transportation System technologies such as synchronization of lights to reduce stress and frustration on the road.
- Expand implementation of speed feedback signs and use data to determine placement.
- Evaluate existing speed limits statewide to address aggressive driving and assure that speed limits are appropriately established.
- Conduct road safety audits to identify the need for improvements such as traffic calming, rumble strips, etc.
- Install milled rumble strips at centerline and roadway shoulders to warn drivers when they are straying into opposing traffic lanes or off the road.

DATA NEEDS

- Use crash data to identify high-risk locations in order to direct resources in enforcement, education, and engineering.