

Comprehensive Measures to Reduce Traffic Fatalities in California

Traffic fatalities are not accidents; they are **preventable outcomes of policy choices**. While roadway design plays a critical role, it must be paired with **consistent enforcement and meaningful consequences** to change behavior and save lives.

1. Structural and Architectural Safety (Foundation, Not a Substitute)

California should continue and expand proven safety infrastructure, including:

- Road diets, lane narrowing, and protected bike lanes
- Raised crosswalks, speed tables, and curb extensions
- Roundabouts replacing high-speed intersections
- Automated traffic calming in school zones and residential areas
- Safer street lighting and pedestrian refuge islands

However, infrastructure alone cannot stop reckless behavior.

2. Reinstated and Sustained Traffic Enforcement

Traffic laws without enforcement invite lawlessness.

- Restore routine traffic stops for speeding, reckless driving, red-light violations, and impaired driving
- Prioritize enforcement on high-injury corridors and repeat-offender hotspots
- Require proactive enforcement even in the absence of a collision
- Ensure enforcement is data-driven, transparent, and focused on dangerous behavior, not revenue

A visible enforcement presence changes behavior before tragedies occur.

3. Inevitable and Escalating Consequences for Traffic Violations

Deterrence requires certainty, not leniency.

- Mandatory fines and penalties for speeding, DUI, and reckless driving—no routine reductions
- Escalating consequences for repeat offenders, including:

- License suspension or permanent revocation
- Mandatory vehicle impoundment or immobilization
- Required installation of speed limiters or ignition interlock devices
- Eliminate plea practices that routinely downgrade serious traffic offenses

Violating traffic laws must carry consequences that offenders cannot ignore or evade.

4. Severe Consequences for Fatal and Near-Fatal Reckless Driving

When reckless driving kills, it must be treated as a **violent offense**.

- Fatalities caused by excessive speed, DUI, street racing, or egregious violations should be charged as:
 - Implied malice murder or equivalent serious felony charges
- Mandatory incarceration, not probation, for reckless driving deaths
- Bail decisions must reflect the danger posed by the defendant to the public
- Victims' families must have meaningful input in charging decisions

Traffic violence should not be treated as an unfortunate mistake—it is a foreseeable and preventable crime.

5. Accountability for Repeat Offenders

Many fatal crashes involve drivers with long histories of violations.

- Create a statewide repeat-offender registry accessible to courts and prosecutors
- Require judges to consider full driving histories at arraignment and sentencing
- Automatic felony enhancement after a defined number of serious violations
- Permanent license revocation for chronic offenders who demonstrate disregard for human life

A person who repeatedly violates traffic laws has proven they cannot safely operate a vehicle.

6. Judicial and Prosecutorial Accountability

Safety laws fail when the system minimizes harm.

- Standardized statewide charging and sentencing guidelines for traffic fatalities
- Oversight of plea bargaining in fatal and serious injury cases
- Public reporting on charging decisions and sentencing outcomes

- Mandatory training for prosecutors and judges on traffic violence and victim impact

Justice must be consistent, predictable, and centered on public safety.

7. Cultural Shift: Treat Traffic Violence as a Public Safety Crisis

- Public campaigns that frame reckless driving as violence, not inconvenience
 - Center victims and survivors in policy discussions
 - Align Vision Zero goals with enforceable legal consequences
 - Make “safe driving” a legal obligation, not a suggestion
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Conclusion

California will not meaningfully reduce traffic fatalities without pairing **engineering** with **enforcement, education, and inevitable consequences**.

When violations are tolerated, they escalate.

When fatalities are minimized, they repeat.

Saving lives requires political will, legal accountability, and the recognition that reckless driving is a choice—with consequences.