

Intelligent Speed Assistance: A New Tool for Safer Roads

A Guide for State Highway Safety Offices





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INTRODUCTION

In a 1789 letter discussing the durability of the newly established United States Constitution, Benjamin Franklin wrote, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” If Franklin had written this after the invention of the automobile, he might have added speeding motorists to this list of certainties.

Many U.S. drivers view speeding as normal behavior. People exceed the posted speed limit for a variety of reasons – habit, frustration, distraction, aggression, running late or simply trying to keep pace with the flow of traffic. Many roads are designed in ways that make higher speeds feel natural, inviting motorists to drive above the posted limit. Plus, there are simply not enough police officers to consistently discourage it. But whatever the reason, driving faster than the limit increases crash risk and makes serious or fatal injuries more likely – not only for the driver and their passengers, but also for pedestrians, and other road users.¹

Why Speeding is So Dangerous

Speeding is risky because it reduces a driver’s reaction time, increases stopping distance and makes it much easier to lose control of the vehicle. It also makes it harder for others on the road to judge how fast a vehicle is approaching. Higher speeds increase the force of the crash, overwhelming both roadway design and vehicle safety features.² It’s particularly deadly for people outside the vehicle. For example, a pedestrian struck by a vehicle traveling 23 mph has about a 25% chance of severe injury and a 10% chance of death. At 40 mph, those risks jump to roughly 75% and 50%, respectively, and they continue to climb with each one-mile-per-hour increase.³

The Data: Speeding’s Toll on U.S. Roads

Those risks show up in the data. Speeding was a contributing factor in 29% of all traffic fatalities nationwide in 2023, killing 11,775, or an average of 32 people a day. A total of 10,541 fatal motor vehicle crashes were attributed to speeding. A crash is speeding-related when the driver is charged with a speeding offense or when behaviors such as racing, driving too fast for conditions or exceeding the posted speed limit are identified as contributing factors.⁴

Teens and Young Males: A Disproportionate Burden

The burden of these crashes isn’t evenly shared. While speeding is widespread among drivers of all ages, it’s especially deadly for teens and young males. A Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) analysis found that 43% of fatal crashes involving teen drivers included speeding, compared with 30% for other age groups. In these crashes, the driver was also more likely to be male, to have run off the road or rolled over the vehicle and to be unbelted.⁵

These patterns aren’t accidental. They stem from teens’ immaturity and limited driving experience. Young drivers haven’t yet developed the judgment needed to recognize hazards and react quickly in dangerous situations, which makes speeding even riskier for them. But this tendency to speed isn’t innate. Teens learn about the behavior at an early age by watching how their parents and other adults behave on the road. Even if teens are taught in driver education or at home that speeding is dangerous, their speeds creep up as they gain confidence – and they’re influenced by the behavior of other drivers around them.⁶

¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2026). Speeding. <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/speeding>

² See Footnote 1.

³ Tefft, B. C. (2011, Sept.). Impact speed and a pedestrian’s risk of severe injury or death. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. <https://aaaafoundation.org/research/impact-speed-pedestrians-risk-severe-injury-death/>

⁴ National Center for Statistics & Analysis. (2025, Oct.). Summary of motor vehicle traffic crashes: 2023 data. [Traffic Safety Facts, Report No. DOT HS 813 762]. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813762>

⁵ Retting, R., & Fischer, P. S. (2021, Jan.). Teens and speeding. Breaking the deadly cycle. Governors Highway Safety Association. https://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/GHSA_TeenSpeeding_Feb16.pdf

⁶ See footnote 5.



The Pandemic Effect: A Shift Toward Riskier Driving

Speeding increased significantly in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the residual effects still linger today. Research conducted in Virginia by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) found that speeding increased during the morning and afternoon commuting hours and drivers never slowed down post-pandemic. Analyzing data from more than 500 speed counters, the IIHS researchers compared the proportion of vehicles exceeding the speed limit by at least 5 and 10 mph between March and June in 2019 and 2020. They then estimated the change in the proportion of drivers speeding by the time of day, day of the week and type of roadway, and found that the number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit by 10 mph or more rose 30% to 40% on all roads other than rural arterials in 2020. The researchers noted that “empty roads probably tempted pandemic-stressed drivers to put the pedal down,” but as “roads filled back up... risky driving (became) the new normal.”⁷

A Long History of Speed Management

This struggle to manage speed on public roads is hardly new. Communities have been trying to rein in excessive speed for centuries, long before cars existed, and the modern surge in risky driving fits into a much older pattern of lawmakers responding to changing transportation habits. That historical backdrop helps explain how today’s speed limits came to be – and why they continue to evolve as driver behavior and roadway conditions change.

Speed limits and their enforcement predate the automobile, with the nation’s first speed laws (circa 1652) banning horse-drawn vehicles from galloping. Fast forward to 1901, when Connecticut enacted a motor vehicle regulation that set the speed limit at 12 mph in cities and 15 mph on rural roads. A national 55 mph speed limit wouldn’t be enacted for another 73 years, driven by rising fuel costs and a call to conserve oil. Two decades later, the national speed limit was rescinded, returning control to the states. Many states now have interstate speed limits of 70 mph or higher, with Texas topping the list at 85 mph. Meanwhile, speed limits on non-interstate roads can range from a low of 10 to 15 mph (often in school zones) to 40 mph or higher.

⁷ Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. (2021, June 21). Pandemic lockdowns made rush-hour speeding, risky driving the new normal. <https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/pandemic-lockdowns-made-rush-hour-speeding-risky-driving-the-new-normal>



Enforcing these limits has primarily been the responsibility of law enforcement. Research confirms that the use of high-visibility enforcement – police on or at the roadside, coupled with public outreach and education – prompts motorists to comply with traffic safety laws.⁸ Police patrols may use radar and lidar to identify speeding motorists, enabling timely intervention. In some jurisdictions, safety cameras are helping to curb speeding motorists. The use of these technologies, however, is banned in some states and/or municipalities.

Roadway Design as a Speed Management Tool

Communities have also used roadway design to help curb speeding; these approaches make it physically harder – or less comfortable – for drivers to go fast. Traffic calming measures such as speed humps, raised tables, narrowed lanes, roundabouts, median islands and curb extensions are all intended to slow vehicles by changing the feel of the road. A related strategy is the use of self-enforcing roads, which are designed so that the roadway’s layout naturally encourages drivers to travel at speeds that match the posted limit. The cost can be relatively low, from using paint or striping to narrow lanes, to more substantial, such as adding turning lanes or constructing roundabouts.

While roadway design can play a role in slowing traffic, physical changes alone can’t address every situation; technology has become an increasingly important part of the solution.

The Need for Complementary Tools

While roadway design can play a role in slowing traffic, physical changes alone can’t address every situation where drivers exceed the speed limit. As traffic safety professionals look for complementary tools, technology has become an increasingly important part of the solution. The newest addition to the speed management toolbox is Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA). This technology is designed to reduce speeding by alerting, advising or intervening when a driver exceeds the posted limit. By integrating global navigation systems, digital maps and traffic sign recognition, ISA enhances driver awareness and encourages greater compliance with speed regulations.

Why ISA Matters

As this technology gains traction, understanding its real-world potential is essential. Despite challenges in driver acceptance and concerns about data privacy, ISA demonstrates strong potential for improving road safety. This guidebook for the State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs) examines the technology’s evolution, implementation, benefits, challenges, limitations, and policy implications. It explores how active ISA can be leveraged to reduce the speeding epidemic, with a focus on persistent speeders, fleet operators and teen drivers. Funding was provided by the National Road Safety Foundation (NRSF) and the SteerSafe Partnership, a coalition of active ISA providers.



⁸ Office of Behavioral Safety Research. (2022, June). Synthesis of studies that relate amount of enforcement to magnitude of safety outcomes. (Traffic Tech Technology Transfer Series. Report No. DOT HS 813 268). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. <https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/62378>

WHAT IS INTELLIGENT SPEED ASSISTANCE?

Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) is an in-vehicle system that identifies the posted speed limit on a given road and compares it with the vehicle's current speed. To do this, ISA draws on several complementary technologies:

- **Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS)**, which pinpoint the vehicle's exact location.
- **Digital speed limit maps**, which provide information on the applicable speed limit for that location.
- **Traffic sign recognition cameras**, which verify speed limit signs in real time.
- **Human-machine interface (HMI)**, which delivers alerts or interventions to the driver.

These components work together to provide timely information and assistance, helping drivers stay within the posted speed limit and reducing the likelihood of speeding-related incidents.

ISA systems are classified according to the level of driver intervention:

- **Informative or Passive ISA** warns the driver visually, audibly or with haptic signals (i.e., steering wheel vibration) when they exceed the posted speed limit.
- **Intervening or Active ISA** takes a more direct role by limiting engine power via the accelerator pedal.

Greater intervention generally leads to greater reductions in speed, but it also raises concerns about driver autonomy and acceptance. Research indicates that drivers tend to be more accepting of passive ISA than active ISA, a topic explored in more detail later in this publication. However, the benefits of active ISA are well-documented, and research from both Europe and the U.S. points to meaningful safety, environmental and economic gains.

ISA's Safety Benefits

ISA has been shown to reduce crash risk and lessen the severity of injuries, particularly in areas with changing speed limits or heavy pedestrian activity.

A 2019 policy report from the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) estimated that active ISA could cut road deaths across Europe by approximately 20%.⁹ Another study projected that equipping all vehicles with a mandatory active ISA system could reduce injury and fatal crashes by 20% and 37%, respectively. When the system incorporates more advanced features, such as responding to real-time network and weather conditions, those reductions could reach 36% for injury crashes and 59% for fatal crashes. Applied to 2023 U.S. fatal crash numbers, this equates to preventing approximately 14,000 to 22,000 fatal crashes each year.¹⁰

Across studies, one pattern is consistent: active ISA reduces speeding when it is installed in vehicles. European trials of both passive and active ISA systems found substantial reductions in speeding and more uniform driving speeds, though these improvements largely disappeared once the systems were turned off or removed. Long-term studies show that some drivers revert to speeding when ISA is removed, but average speeds remain lower among users compared to non-users as long as the technology is engaged. Because speed is so closely tied to crash risk, these reductions translate into significant safety benefits, with some analyses suggesting ISA may outperform other driver assistance systems in reducing fatalities and injuries.¹¹

⁹ Adnait-Fodero, D., & Jost, G. (2019, Feb.). Reducing speeding in Europe, PIN Flash Report 36. European Transport Safety Council. <https://etsc.eu/reducing-speeding-in-europe-pin-flash-36/>

¹⁰ Carsten, O. M. J., & Tate, F. N. (2005). Intelligent speed adaptation: Accident savings and cost-benefit analysis. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 37(3), pp. 407-416. https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/2008/2/ITS6_Intelligent_Speed-adaption_UPLOADABLE.pdf

¹¹ Kirley, B. B., Robison, K. L., Goodwin, A. H., Harmon, K. J., O'Brien, N. P., West, A., Harrell, S. S., Thomas, L., & Brookshire, K. (2023, Nov.) Countermeasures that work: A highway safety countermeasure guide for State Highway Safety Offices, 11th edition. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. <https://www.nhtsa.gov/book/countermeasures-that-work/speeding-and-speed-management/countermeasures/other-strategies>

U.S. research shows similar results. Trials involving young drivers and repeat offenders found that speeding decreased when passive ISA alerts or control features were active, but the behavior change didn't persist once the technology was disabled. Systems that combine driver alerts with parental feedback or accountability tools tend to produce stronger effects than alerts alone, though sustained changes were limited.¹²

Given these findings, targeted deployment among high-risk groups, such as young drivers, fleet drivers and persistent speeders, appears to be the most effective rollout strategy. Using incentives such as insurance discounts and rewards to bolster ISA use has produced mixed results. They can enhance the impact of ISA, but do not, on their own, generate strong voluntary adoption.¹³ Active ISA fleet pilots in New York City and Washington, D.C. have also demonstrated promising safety outcomes, which will be discussed later in this report.

A DRIVER'S PERSPECTIVE ON ACTIVE ISA

In early 2026, I tested active ISA on my personal vehicle, a Toyota Tundra. Initially set to activate at 2 mph over the limit, it caused frequent speedometer checking and distraction. After adjusting the thresholds to 5 mph over on local roads and 10 mph over on interstates, the system felt far more natural. I could focus on driving while still being prevented from significantly exceeding the speed limit.

ISA reliably recognizes posted speed limits and restricts acceleration when I reach the manufacturer set thresholds. However, it cannot yet adapt to dynamic limits in school zones or active work zones, and it defaults to a preset maximum speed or the last recognized speed limit when cell coverage is lost.

Overall, my experience has been extremely positive. Active ISA now provides peace of mind and helps me maintain safe speeds with minimal intrusion. I believe voluntary adoption – especially by parents of novice drivers and fleet operators – could meaningfully improve safety. Requiring active ISA for repeat speed offenders could also be transformative, much like ignition interlocks for impaired drivers.



– Chuck DeWeese,
Principal of Connecting Clients, LLC

Environmental Benefits

By reducing unnecessary acceleration and excessive speed, ISA helps reduce fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Studies show measurable improvement; for example, fuel use drops by nearly 6% on 70 mph roads. These reductions support broader environmental and sustainability goals.¹⁴

Economic Benefits

Fewer speeding-related crashes mean lower costs for emergency response, medical care, insurance claims, and infrastructure repairs. For drivers and communities, these avoided expenses can add up to thousands of dollars. Analyses consistently show that ISA delivers high benefit-to-cost ratios, potentially returning up to 15 times the cost of implementing and operating these systems.¹⁵

¹² See Footnote 11.

¹³ See Footnote 11.

¹⁴ See Footnote 10.

¹⁵ See Footnote 10.



Active ISA Challenges and Limitations

Even with its strong safety potential, active ISA faces several challenges that can impact how quickly and widely it is adopted.

Driver Acceptance of Active ISA

Concerns about reduced autonomy and intrusive system behavior are among the most common barriers. Some drivers view active ISA as an infringement on personal freedom and privacy or worry that it could limit their ability to respond to unusual situations. For example, transporting someone to the hospital, passing a slow vehicle on a two-lane road or fleeing a dangerous situation. These concerns are understandable, but also addressable. Drivers don't have the legal right to exceed posted speed limits, and active ISA is designed to curb behavior that endangers everyone on the road, not just the driver. In addition, active ISA systems can be installed with a situational speed assist button that allows drivers to temporarily suspend the technology for a short period of time when necessary.

Public opinion research reflects this tension. A 2025 national survey of drivers 21 years of age and older found that 64% of respondents viewed speeding as an important issue in their community, but 72%

expressed concerns about using active ISA to slow down drivers. Support increased, however, when active ISA was framed as a tool for managing repeat speeding offenders, with nearly half approving.¹⁶

Research from IIHS found similar patterns: roughly 75% of drivers agreed that ISA would reduce speed-related crashes and more than 60% found passive ISA acceptable. Support for active ISA was lower, at about 50%. Acceptance also varied depending on how strictly the system intervened; only one-third supported active ISA that activates at 1-2 mph over the limit, while acceptance rose when the threshold was set at 10 mph.¹⁷

Legal and Ethical Concerns

Policymakers must balance public safety benefits with concerns about personal freedom and privacy. Active ISA is not meant to track a driver's movements or share sensitive data with government agencies if they are unrelated to offender program violations; it simply monitors vehicle speed relative to the posted limit. In reality, mobile phones and motor vehicles collect far more detailed information about driver behavior. The European Union, which has much stricter privacy rules than the U.S., mandated passive ISA on all new vehicles beginning in 2024, and public acceptance has been strong.

¹⁶ HERO Digital Network. (2025) Technology and transportation safety survey [PowerPoint presentation]. AMI Entertainment.

¹⁷ Reagan, J. J., & Cicchino, J. (2025). ISA in the USA? The likelihood of U.S. drivers accepting and using intelligent speed assistance. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety-Highway Safety Loss Data Institute. <https://www.iihs.org/research-areas/bibliography/ref/2308>

Accuracy and Reliability

Critics often question whether ISA can perform reliably in real-world conditions. Front-facing cameras used in passive ISA systems may struggle to read signs in heavy rain, snow, fog or glare, and may miss signs that are obscured, damaged or dirty. Cameras can also misinterpret exit or on-ramp signs or confuse minimum speed signs with standard speed limit signs.

Best practice for active ISA is to utilize GPS and onboard maps, which provide consistent speed limit information even when road signs are missing or unreadable. While outdated maps can cause errors, particularly if updates are infrequent, many active ISA vendors now provide real-time or frequent updates and modern systems handle transitions between road types, such as on ramps, with high accuracy. Temporary situational speed assist features also allow drivers to accelerate if the system has not yet recognized a higher speed limit.

GPS loss is another concern, especially in tunnels, rural areas or dense urban environments. While research doesn't quantify how often these failures occur, ISA systems are designed to mitigate them by combining multiple data sources, such as cellular signals, map-matching software and internal motion sensors that estimate a vehicle's position when GPS signals temporarily drop. In addition, when signal is temporarily lost, the system will default to either a preset maximum speed set by the manufacturer or the last recognized speed limit until connectivity is restored. As one active ISA user noted after six months of driving, the only momentary failure occurred in a parking garage.

It is important to note that a person operating an ISA-equipped motor vehicle always remains exclusively responsible for the safe and lawful operation of the vehicle. The use of an ISA device is not a defense to, or mitigating factor in, any violation of the rules of the road.

While occasional inaccuracies may lead to driver frustration or even the deactivation of a passive ISA feature, these occurrences will likely be limited in nature, especially with the use of GPS and onboard maps. Active ISA's ability to significantly reduce the occurrence and severity of crashes outweighs the few instances involving accuracy issues.

Implementation Costs

Costs can also be a barrier. Active ISA installation typically costs \$100-\$150, with system providers charging daily user fees of about \$4. The actual costs vary by vendor and jurisdiction. Active ISA installation is typically straightforward in vehicles with electronic throttles (95% of today's vehicles). Vehicles with cable-driven throttles are almost obsolete; however, for the 5% of vehicles with them, installing ISA may be technically impractical or impossible. Some states are considering subsidies to ensure low-income individuals have access to the technology and [model language](#) from the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) includes a discount for people who qualify for federal subsidy programs.^{18 19} Despite these upfront costs, ISA can save drivers money by helping them avoid speeding tickets, legal fees, higher fuel consumption, and costs associated with license suspension or vehicle repairs after a crash. Over time, these savings can offset or exceed the cost of installation and operation.

¹⁸ Program Business. (2025, May 6). Intelligent speed assistance: A new tool in traffic enforcement. <https://programbusiness.com/news/intelligent-speed-assistance-a-new-tool-in-traffic-safety-enforcement/#:~:text=Several%20technology%20companies%20that%20previously,raises%20important%20points%20to%20consider>

¹⁹ Families for Safe Streets. (2019). It's time to stop super speeders. <https://www.familiesforsafestreeets.org/stop-super-speeders>.

PILOTING AND REGULATING ISA

Piloting and regulating active ISA has evolved over several decades, with early experiments laying the groundwork for the large-scale deployments now underway in Europe and emerging in the U.S. The trajectory shows a steady shift from small research trials to broad policy adoption, driven by growing evidence that active ISA can meaningfully reduce speeding and improve safety.

Europe has required passive ISA be built into new vehicles, particularly within jurisdictions that have adopted the Safe System approach.²⁰ London, meanwhile, offers one of the most prominent successful examples of the use of active ISA in fleet vehicles. Beginning in 2019, all new buses were required to be equipped with active ISA. Since then, more than 4,500 ISA-equipped buses have entered service, and Transport for London (TfL) has retrofitted about 360 with aftermarket active ISA systems. According to TfL, all buses fitted with active ISA remained within the speed limit 97-99% of the time. Additionally, the percentage of time buses spent travelling above the speed limit fell from 15-19% to 1-3% in 20 mph zones.²¹

The European Union (EU) followed with a major policy milestone. As of July 2022, all new vehicles sold in the EU must include passive ISA. The regulation requires that systems:

- Alert drivers when they exceed the speed limit through feedback or accelerator cues.
- Use information from road signs, signals, infrastructure, digital maps or a combination of these sources.
- Activate automatically when vehicles start but allow drivers to turn them off and still receive speed limit information.
- Permit drivers to exceed the prompted speed if necessary.

While the mandate has critics, it's strongly supported by the European Transport Safety Council, which views ISA as a proven tool for changing driver behavior, reducing crashes and saving lives. In fact, nearly 10 years before the ISA mandate, EURO NCAP



added ISA – both active and passive – to its five-star vehicle safety ratings, awarding additional points to vehicles that linked speed limit information to warnings and speed-limiting functions.²²

U.S. Pilots and Emerging Adoption

In the U.S., the most significant active ISA pilot to date was conducted by New York City's Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) in 2022. Approximately 500 fleet vehicles were equipped with an aftermarket, active ISA device that prevented acceleration beyond a set threshold above the posted speed limit. Analysis of 270 of these vehicles showed a 64% reduction in time spent driving more than 11 mph over the posted speed limit. The effect varied by road type – from approximately 50% on 25 mph streets to 82% on 50 mph roads. Importantly, habitual speeders showed reductions similar to the broader fleet, suggesting active ISA can be effective across a wide range of driver profiles.²³

²⁰ See Footnote 11.

²¹ Transport for London. (2026). Bus safety [Web page]. [https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/safety-and-security/road-safety/bus-safety#:~:text=The%20Transport%20for%20London%20\(TfL\)%20bus%20safety,involved%20road%20users%20to%20avoid%20the%20collision](https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/safety-and-security/road-safety/bus-safety#:~:text=The%20Transport%20for%20London%20(TfL)%20bus%20safety,involved%20road%20users%20to%20avoid%20the%20collision)

²² European Transport Safety Council/iSAFER. (n.d.). New buses in London will be fitted with intelligent speed assistance technology following successful trials. Case study: Intelligent speed assistance (ISA) on London buses. https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/ISA_BusesIntelligentLondon-Final-pdf.pdf

²³ Yahoodik, S., Epstein, A. K., Brodeur, A., Drake, J., & Landsman, Tl. (2024, Oct.). New York City intelligent speed assistance pilot evaluation analysis and findings. U.S. Department of Transportation Volpe Center. <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dcass/downloads/pdf/fleet/nyc-intelligent-speed-assistance-pilot-evaluation-2024-oct.pdf>



D.C. fleet vehicles display this sticker to show they are ISA-equipped and speed-limited.

This large pilot came on the heels of an earlier 50-vehicle NYC trial, which found that active ISA kept vehicles within speed parameters 99% of the time. The DCAS implementation was aftermarket and prevented acceleration at or above the posted limit without affecting braking. Drivers could not deactivate the system, but they were provided with a 15-second override button for emergencies or unusual situations.²⁴

Looking Ahead

These pilot programs and regulatory actions illustrate how active ISA has moved from concept to practice, with growing evidence that the technology can reduce speeding and improve safety across diverse driving environments. As more jurisdictions consider ISA, the next question is how to scale these systems to maximize the safety benefits while maintaining public trust. The District of Columbia (District) offers a compelling example of how this progression is unfolding in real time.

The District began testing and implementing active ISA in its fleet vehicles, starting with 10 small school buses in early 2025. This initial pilot – launched through a partnership between the Department of For-Hire Vehicles and the District Highway Safety Office (DHSO) – provided an early proof point for how active ISA could function in everyday operations. Three months into the program, the buses had logged 10,000 miles without a single speeding event.²⁵ Drivers reported that the technology not only prevented unintentional speeding but also allowed them to focus more fully on supervising children, knowing they could not exceed the posted limit. According to a DHSO official, the intent behind this effort is to have these drivers model the safe behaviors the District hopes to see more broadly on its roads, reinforcing active ISA as a tool for long-term culture change.²⁶

Building on its initial efforts, the District launched a second active ISA pilot in Fall 2025 through a partnership between the DHSO, the Department of Public Works, and the Office of Risk Management. Approximately 300 devices were installed in vehicles operated by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). Employees received training on how to use the technology and how to report any issues encountered on the road. To support transparency and public awareness, DHSO also created a decal for active ISA-equipped vehicles indicating that the operator could not exceed the posted speed limit.

Early results from the pilot reinforce the promise of active ISA. CFSA reported a striking 91% reduction in speeding occurrences across its 80 vehicle fleet, attributing the improvement directly to the technology.²⁷ DDOT officials similarly noted that while some adjustments have been necessary, active ISA is helping employees maintain posted speeds more consistently. The findings from this pilot will be compiled into a case study that GHSA will share with SHSOs and other partners working to address speeding, offering valuable insights for jurisdictions considering active ISA adoption at scale.

²⁴ See Footnote 23.

²⁵ Rick Birt, conversation with the co-author, April 2025.

²⁶ LifeSafer. (2025, Aug. 29). LifeSafer pilots ISA with DC School Connect to further the District's road safety initiatives. <https://www.lifesafersa.com/newsroom/news/lifesafersa-pilots-isa-with-dc-school-connect-to-further-the-districts-road-safety-initiatives>

²⁷ DC Child and Family Services. (2026, Feb. 19). Intelligent speed assistance: A pilot program's perspective [PowerPoint presentation].



Legislation

Washington, D.C. became the first U.S. jurisdiction to enact active ISA legislation for persistent speeding offenders, marking a significant policy milestone in the national conversation about speed management. The STEER Act (Strengthening Traffic Enforcement, Education, and Responsibility), which took effect in September 2025, applies to D.C. and out-of-state drivers who receive speeding-related suspensions stemming from criminal or aggravated reckless driving convictions. In D.C., criminal reckless driving includes driving 30 mph or more above the posted speed limit or driving 20 mph or more above the limit and causing bodily harm, colliding with another vehicle, or causing property damage of \$1,000 or more.

Previously, drivers from Maryland and Virginia could accumulate significant fines in D.C. without facing meaningful consequences. In addition, judges may now require motorists convicted of reckless driving to install active ISA devices as a condition of continued driving.

Following D.C.'s lead, Virginia enacted active ISA legislation that will take effect on July 1, 2026. Under this law, judges may order active ISA installation as an alternative to license suspension for individuals convicted of reckless driving, "super-speeding" (100 mph or more) or chronic speeding offenses. The device must be installed in any vehicle the offender operates, and the individual is responsible for all costs unless deemed indigent. Tampering with the device constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor.

Maryland, meanwhile, will launch a legislatively mandated, five-year active ISA pilot program beginning on October 1, 2027. Drivers facing license suspension or revocation due to accumulated points resulting from a combination of speeding, reckless driving, or racing must install the device. The legislation also allows for a restricted driving permit with an active ISA and contains privacy provisions.

Washington State has also adopted active ISA legislation, with a delayed implementation date. Drivers whose licenses would otherwise be suspended for reckless driving (when speeding is a

contributing factor) or racing will be required to install an ISA device for 180 days. Like Virginia, tampering with the device is classified as a gross misdemeanor.

In 2026, active ISA legislation has been introduced in 16 states, with several on the cusp of passage. As active ISA technology gains visibility and more pilot results become available, more states are introducing ISA as a solution to address repeated speeding offenders.

Support for ISA as a tool to address speeding continues to grow nationally. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) have endorsed active and passive ISA, as have GHSA, AAMVA, AAA, the National Safety Council, Vision Zero Network and Families for Safe Streets. Two active ISA providers, LifeSafer and Smart Start, formed the SteerSafe Partnership, a coalition focused on educating states about the benefits of the technology and advancing practical, evidence-based legislation.

As more states explore ISA legislation and consider how best to integrate this technology into their safety strategies, it's important to understand who stands to benefit most from its use. While active ISA has broad applicability, certain groups are especially well-positioned to realize meaningful safety gains from its adoption.



KEY ACTIVE ISA USERS

Speeding is a common behavior, with most drivers admitting they exceed the posted speed limit daily.²⁸ While ISA would benefit all drivers, three groups would benefit most from having the active ISA technology installed in their vehicles.

Persistent Speeders

Chronic speeding offenders often exhibit risk-taking tendencies, impulsiveness and a belief that their driving skills mitigate the dangers associated with excessive speed. Many become desensitized to penalties, viewing fines as an acceptable cost of driving and the risk of being caught low. Traditional enforcement approaches, such as patrols, radar, safety cameras, public education campaigns, fines and even license suspension, rely on sporadic detection and delayed consequences, making them insufficient for addressing entrenched speeding behavior.²⁹

Decades of research affirm the effectiveness of ignition interlock devices (IID) in preventing impaired drivers from operating a vehicle after drinking. IIDs not only stop impaired driving in the moment but also contribute to long-term behavior change.³⁰ Active ISA offers a parallel approach for speeding. By preventing drivers from exceeding the speed limit while allowing them to retain their driving privileges, active ISA provides immediate, continuous intervention without disrupting employment or family responsibilities. Its combination of real-time prevention, ongoing monitoring and behavioral reinforcement stands in contrast to the intermittent nature of traditional sanctions.

As noted earlier, D.C. and several states have begun requiring repeat offenders to install active ISA devices. These programs typically involve court-ordered installation for a defined period, ensuring accountability through continuous monitoring. The societal benefits extend well beyond individual drivers. Reduced speeding among chronic offenders leads to fewer severe crashes, less strain on emergency response and medical systems and safer roads for all users. The cumulative effect is a meaningful reduction in the social and environmental costs associated with high-risk driving.

²⁸ Zhang, X., & Steinbach, R. (2024, Dec.). 2024 traffic safety culture index. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. <https://aaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/202512-AAAFTS-2024-TSCL.pdf>

²⁹ Stanojevic, P., Jovanovic, D., & Lajunen, T. (2013, March). Influence of traffic enforcement on the attitudes and behaviors of drivers, *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, Vol. 52, 29-38. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23298706/>

³⁰ Casanova-Powell, T., Hedlund, J., Leaf, W., & Tison, J. (2015, May). Evaluation of State ignition interlock programs: Interlock use analyses from 28 States, 2006–2011. (Report No. DOT HS 812 145). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/31167>

Fleet Drivers

Speeding-related crashes involving commercial vehicles can impose enormous financial and human costs, including life-altering injuries and fatalities. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), the economic impacts of these costs range from more than \$46,000 for a non-injury crash to well over \$14 million for a fatal crash.³¹ These costs encompass vehicle and cargo damage, medical expenses, insurance deductibles, lost productivity, vehicle downtime, increased insurance premiums, legal fees and the administrative burden of investigations and claims processing. Beyond the direct financial implications, companies may also face delayed deliveries, lose customer confidence and experience increased driver turnover.

Commercial fleets also incur substantial costs from speeding violations and higher fuel consumption associated with excessive speed. Equipping fleet vehicles with active ISA can help ensure drivers operate within posted speed limits, reducing fuel consumption, minimizing speeding-related violations and the associated fines, administrative costs and potential license impacts. By preventing speed-related crashes – often the most costly and disruptive events fleets face – ISA reduces claims, stabilizes or reduces insurance premiums and protects a company’s safety reputation. Additionally, ISA-generated data analytics allow employers to identify drivers who may need additional coaching and/or training.

Importantly, active ISA technologies can be integrated into existing fleet management systems. Installation typically involves selecting a compatible ISA solution, installing or retrofitting in-vehicle hardware, and connecting the system to current telematics platforms through Application Programming Interfaces, Software Development Kits, or cloud-based interfaces. Once integrated, fleets configure system settings, conduct pilot testing, train drivers and use real-time data to monitor performance and support coaching and compliance. Key components include telematics hardware, GPS and mapping capabilities, AI-enabled cameras for

speed limit detection, engine interfaces for active speed control, and centralized fleet software for data management and analysis.

The benefits resonate with drivers as well. One fleet operator shared, “I love it. It’s a big weight off my shoulders. I don’t have to worry about crashes or tickets... but more than that I love the safety part of it.”

The benefits of active ISA extend beyond commercial motor vehicle fleets to include non-CMV fleet operators such as private light duty vehicles and municipal vehicles. While these vehicles may be smaller, the benefits discussed above, including reductions in fuel consumption, speeding violations and crashes, and insurance costs, among others will be realized.

Teen Drivers

Parents often experience a mix of emotions when their teens begin driving. While they may be excited about their child’s growing independence, they also worry about their safety. Concerns about inexperience, distracted driving, speeding and the potential for crashes can raise parental stress. Many parents find themselves constantly monitoring their teens’ driving habits or feeling nervous once their teens are driving without supervision. This period can be marked by a sense of vulnerability and a desire to protect their child from harm.

Adding to this parental angst, the period from Memorial Day to Labor Day is often referred to as the “100 Deadliest Days of Summer,” during which data show an increase in teen driver crashes, injuries and fatalities. During this time, school is out and inexperienced teens, who have a propensity to speed, drive distracted or impaired, spend more time on the road.

³¹ Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. (2024). FMC-PRE-240812-001-Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration crash cost methodology report 2024. <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety/data-and-statistics/fmc-pre-240812-001-federal-motor-carrier-safety-administration-crash>

Thankfully, state Graduated Driving Licensing (GDL) laws exist to gradually introduce new drivers to the responsibilities of operating a vehicle, aiming to reduce crashes and improve road safety. These laws implement a phased approach, requiring novice drivers to hold learner's permits for a specified period, complete supervised driving hours and comply with nighttime driving limits and passenger restrictions, among others. Many jurisdictions also enforce a probationary or provisional license phase where young drivers must demonstrate safe driving behaviors before obtaining full licensure. These laws are supported by educational programs and strict penalties for violations, all contributing to safer roads and more experienced, responsible drivers over time.

Active ISA presents an opportunity for parents to provide another layer of protection during this stressful period, as the device prevents a teen driver from speeding and reduces the risk of serious incidents. Speeding is one of the most dangerous behaviors for novice drivers³² and active ISA acts as a set of training wheels as teens navigate the complex task of driving. Active ISA allows parents of newly licensed drivers to be comforted knowing that their teen driver will follow speed limits consistently, understand and respect the rules of the road, and model safe behaviors – ultimately increasing safety and reducing the likelihood of serious crashes.

GHSA, in partnership with NRSF, SCRAM/LifeSafer and the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) are currently implementing a six-month active ISA pilot involving families with teens from across the U.S. Active ISA is installed in the vehicles the teens drive (either their own or a family vehicle). The system includes a 5-mph tolerance above the posted speed limit and allows a single situational speed assist per trip. Results will be compiled in a case study that will be shared with SHSOs following the pilot.

³² Retting, R., & Fischer, P. S. (2021, Jan.). Teens and speeding, breaking the deadly cycle. Governors Highway Traffic Safety Administration. https://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/GHSA_TeenSpeeding_Feb16.pdf

Having [active] ISA in my car just feels safer. There are times when I would have been speeding, and it saved me from making that mistake.

– 17-year-old teen driver



When my mom said I had to put an [active] ISA in my car, I really didn't like it. But now [that] I've been driving a few months... it's really helping me.

– 16-year-old teen driver



THE ROLE OF STATE HIGHWAY SAFETY OFFICES

As these three user groups demonstrate, active ISA's safety benefits extend across the driving population – from high-risk offenders to commercial operators to newly licensed teens. But maximizing those benefits requires coordinated leadership and credible public education. State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs) are uniquely positioned to guide this work. Active ISA technology has the potential to reduce speed-related crashes, save lives and improve traffic safety.

SHSOs can play a critical role in educating diverse stakeholders about the technology and help build the public support necessary for broad adoption. By developing targeted outreach strategies for law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, parents, teens, fleet operators, and legislators, SHSOs can accelerate understanding and acceptance of active ISA, while addressing legitimate concerns about privacy, cost and personal freedom.

Law Enforcement

Traffic enforcement has declined over the past decade, a trend intensified during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Active ISA can complement traditional enforcement by significantly reducing the number of speeding drivers on the road, allowing officers to redirect their time and attention to other pressing public safety priorities.

SHSOs are encouraged to partner with law enforcement academies, in-service training providers and ISA suppliers to deliver instruction on how active ISA works and how it influences driver behavior. Hands-on experience with active ISA-equipped vehicles can help officers understand both the capabilities and limitations of the technology and may inspire some to become credible ambassadors within their agencies and communities.

Law Enforcement Liaisons (LEL) can support this effort by compiling case studies from jurisdictions where active ISA adoption has reduced speed-related crashes and sharing them with state and local law enforcement agencies. These real-world examples help officers visualize the technology's impact on daily operations. LELs can also facilitate peer-to-peer learning by connecting departments with active ISA experience to those just beginning to explore the technology.

As law enforcement becomes more familiar with active ISA and its implications for roadway safety, the next critical group requiring focused education is the legal community – those responsible for prosecuting traffic offenses and determining appropriate sentencing.

Prosecutors and Judges

The legal community needs a clear understanding of how active ISA works and how it can support the prosecution and sentencing of persistent speeders. SHSOs, working through their networks of Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutors (TSRPs) and Judicial Outreach Liaisons (JOLs), can develop continuing legal education programs that explain how active ISA data is generated, its reliability and how program violations can be introduced as evidence in court. Prosecutors must understand the technical specifications of different active ISA systems, while judges require similar knowledge to make informed decisions about admissibility and to interpret technical testimony. Judges may also need guidance on state laws that authorize them to require violators to install active ISA devices as part of sentencing.

Educational materials should address common legal questions, such as whether ISA data constitutes reliable evidence of speed limit awareness, how voluntary versus mandatory ISA systems might affect liability and what privacy protections apply to data collected by these systems. SHSOs can collaborate with state bar associations and JOLs to integrate ISA content into existing traffic law trainings. Symposiums that bring together prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges and technical experts can foster dialogue about best practices for handling ISA-related cases. These forums allow legal professionals to explore complex issues collaboratively. For example, whether the presence of a functioning ISA system should be considered a mitigating factor in sentencing, or how to address cases where drivers intentionally override or circumvent the technology.

SHSOs may also consider partnering with local courts to explore voluntary or court-ordered active ISA installation for persistent speeders or novice drivers convicted of speeding violations. Positioning active ISA as a behavioral and public safety countermeasure rather than a punitive sanction can help courts view the technology as a tool for long-term safety improvement.

As the legal community gains a clearer understanding of active ISA's role in adjudicating speeding offenses, another influential group – parents – requires focused outreach to support safe driving behaviors among novice drivers.

Parents

Parents are critical decision-makers in household vehicle purchases and in setting expectations for their teen drivers. They also need a clear understanding of the risks speeding poses for new drivers and how active ISA technology can help mitigate those risks and help keep their children safe. Educational materials should explain active ISA in plain, accessible language, avoiding technical jargon and emphasizing practical, real-world benefits. Videos demonstrating how active ISA prevents dangerous speeding situations often resonate more effectively than statistics alone, and some active ISA providers offer user-friendly demonstrations that SHSOs can leverage.

Parent education can be integrated into existing driver education programs, parent-teen driving events and school-based safety initiatives. SHSOs are encouraged to collaborate with state licensing agencies and driver education providers to develop resources parents can use when teaching their teens to drive. Including a simple checklist to verify that a vehicle's ISA system is activated and functioning properly can help support safe driving habits.

Cost-benefit information helps parents make informed decisions. Materials should address common questions about potential insurance discounts for active ISA-equipped vehicles, the cost of adding ISA features when purchasing or leasing a vehicle, and the potential savings associated with avoiding speeding tickets and crashes. Encouraging families to ask their insurance carrier about ISA-related discounts reinforces the safety and economic value of the technology.

Parent testimonials can be especially powerful. Stories from families who have benefited from active ISA provide relatable, real-world examples that help others see the technology's value. SHSOs can collect and share these narratives through social media, community presentations and traditional media outlets to build trust and normalize active ISA adoption among families with teen drivers.

As parents gain a clearer understanding of ISA's value in protecting novice drivers, SHSOs should also focus on engaging teens directly – an audience with distinct motivations, communication styles and risk profiles.

Active ISA has allowed... [my wife [and me] to worry less when the kids aren't at the house, knowing... they're never exceeding the speed limit.

– Parent of two teen drivers

Teens

Teen drivers have the highest crash risk of any age group, and speed-related crashes are a leading cause of death among adolescents.³³ At the same time, teens are often early adopters, making them an important audience for ISA outreach.³⁴

SHSOs should frame active ISA technology as a tool that supports independence rather than a restriction imposed by adults. Messages that highlight how active ISA helps new drivers build safe habits, avoid costly tickets, maintain lower insurance rates and retain driving privileges are more likely to resonate. Positioning active ISA as a smart, tech-forward choice rather than a punishment aligns with how teens view technology in other aspects of their lives.

Peer-to-peer education can be especially effective. SHSOs can encourage grantees working with youth organizations and teen driving advocacy groups to develop and implement speeding and active ISA-focused campaigns. Teens trained as active ISA ambassadors can present at schools, create social media content and lead discussions about technology-assisted safe driving.

Interactive demonstrations also help teens understand active ISA in a hands-on, low-pressure environment. Driving simulators, closed-course demonstrations or behind-the-wheel training vehicles equipped with active ISA allow teens to experience the technology and can help reduce apprehension about systems that might feel unfamiliar or invasive. SHSOs can partner with driver education providers to incorporate these demonstrations into their curricula.

Finally, incorporating gamification and competition elements can tap into teen psychology. Recognition programs that reward consistent active ISA use and safe speed practices – through leaderboards, achievement badges or public recognition at school events – can motivate teens to embrace the technology while fostering positive peer pressure around safe driving.

As teens represent one of the highest risk groups on the road, another audience with significant potential to advance active ISA adoption – and demonstrate its benefits at scale – is commercial and government fleet operators.

Fleet Operators

Commercial and government fleets represent a major opportunity for widespread active ISA adoption, with the potential to influence not only organizational safety culture, but also the personal driving habits of employees who experience the technology first-hand.

Government entities can be early adopters and help shift the public's perception of speeding. Rather than relying solely on messaging about the dangers of speeding, SHSOs and their oversight agencies can lead by example and equip state and municipal fleets with active ISA. This visible commitment to safer roads can capture community attention and model the behaviors SHSOs are working to promote.

SHSOs are encouraged to develop materials that clearly communicate the return on investment for fleet managers. These resources should quantify potential savings from reduced fuel consumption, lower crash rates, decreased vehicle maintenance costs due to less aggressive driving, fewer traffic citations and potential reductions in insurance premiums. Industry-specific case studies, such as the New York City and Washington, D.C. pilots, can help fleet managers understand how active ISA performs in operations similar to their own. Because the needs of municipal fleets differ from those of long-haul trucking companies or ride-hailing services, educational materials should be tailored to address sector-specific challenges and opportunities. Peer learning networks can further support adoption allowing fleet managers to share experiences, implementation strategies and lessons learned.

Technical assistance programs can help fleet operators navigate the practical aspects of active ISA adoption, including selecting appropriate systems, integrating ISA with existing telematics platforms, training drivers, and developing policies around

³³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2026, Jan. 29). Teen drivers [Web page]. <https://www.cdc.gov/teen-drivers/about/index.html>

³⁴ Haddock, A., Ward, N., Yu, R., O'Dea, N. (2022, Oct. 27). Positive effects of digital technology use by adolescents: A scoping review of the literature. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/21/14009>



system use and data management. Providing a vetted list of technology vendors can also streamline implementation.

Recognition programs that celebrate fleet leaders in active ISA adoption can create positive competition and public accountability. Acknowledging government and private-sector fleets that achieve measurable safety improvements through active ISA can generate positive media coverage and marketing value, while inspiring other operators to follow their example.

As fleet operators demonstrate how active ISA can deliver measurable safety and operational benefits at scale, another group with major influence over the technology's future – state legislators – requires focused, evidence-based engagement.

Legislators

State legislators have the authority to incentivize or mandate active ISA adoption, establish data privacy protection, create insurance frameworks, and fund deployment programs. To make informed decisions, they need balanced, objective information about the technology's capabilities and limitations. SHSOs can support this by partnering with organizations such as the SteerSafe Partnership and other advocacy groups to educate elected officials about the chronic speeding problem, particularly the risks posed by repeat offenders. Recent legislative activity shows that active ISA for fleets and persistent

violators has garnered bipartisan support, making this an opportune time to start or advance these conversations.

SHSOs can provide legislators with concise, evidence-based briefings that outline the safety benefits of active ISA, while acknowledging legitimate concerns about privacy, cost and implementation. These materials should also include state-specific data on speeding, including issues such as super-speeder violations or street-racing trends, to contextualize the need for action.

Helping legislators understand how other jurisdictions have approached active ISA programs can further inform policy development. Providing information about state-level initiatives, pilot programs and policy proposals from across the country also allows legislators to learn from peers and avoid common pitfalls. Both [AAMVA](#) and the [SteerSafe Partnership](#) developed model legislation that SHSOs may share with elected officials.

Stakeholder forums can also be valuable. Bringing together vehicle manufacturers, privacy advocates, insurance companies, safety organizations, law enforcement and consumer groups helps legislators appreciate the complexity of active ISA implementation and identify areas of consensus and disagreement. SHSOs can serve as neutral conveners, ensuring that these discussions remain grounded in facts and diverse perspectives.

Pilot program proposals offer legislators a low-risk way to explore active ISA without committing to mandates or major expenditures. SHSOs can help design demonstration projects that test active ISA in state-owned fleets, evaluate voluntary adoption incentives or compare different policy approaches. Local data generated from these pilots often resonates more strongly with legislators than research from other regions or countries.

Economic impact analyses can address concerns about how active ISA policies affect their constituents and state economies. These assessments should examine potential effects on automotive industries, financial impacts on low-income vehicle owners, implications for traffic fine revenue, and broader economic benefits from reduced crashes. SHSOs can collaborate with university researchers or consulting firms to develop credible, independent analyses.

Families for Safe Streets (FSS) has compiled [ten lessons](#) from recent legislative efforts that demonstrate how active ISA technology can succeed in the U.S. Key insights include understanding the political landscape, setting realistic goals and focusing on persistent speeders rather than the general driving population to build public acceptance. FSS also emphasizes the importance of diverse coalitions, survivor advocate voices, hands-on demonstrations, and learning from jurisdictions with successful programs.

FSS has developed additional [resources](#) that SHSOs can use as they consider ISA implementation, including a “Stop Super Speeders” policy blueprint, a map of states likely to introduce ISA legislation in 2026 and a best-practices whitepaper.

IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP FOR STATE HIGHWAY SAFETY OFFICES

Successful ISA initiatives require strategic planning, adequate resources and sustained commitment. SHSOs should consider adding active ISA programs to their highway safety plans. SHSOs interested in advancing active ISA within their states should begin by conducting a comprehensive stakeholder assessment to identify which groups have the greatest need for education and which hold the most influence over its adoption. This assessment helps guide resource allocation and ensures that early efforts focus on activities with the highest potential for success.

Developing a core set of educational active ISA materials or leveraging materials available from other sources, such as Families for Safe Streets, is a critical next step. These resources may include fact sheets explaining active ISA technology, frequently asked questions, audience-specific slide decks, demonstration videos and policy briefs for decision-makers. Materials should be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect new research, technological advances and policy developments.

Equally important is ensuring that SHSO staff have a strong foundational understanding of active ISA. Staff training should cover how active ISA works, its effectiveness as demonstrated in peer-reviewed research, relevant policy considerations and communication strategies tailored to different audiences. Identifying external subject matter experts who can provide technical guidance or serve as speakers for educational events can further strengthen SHSO capacity.

Establishing clear metrics and evaluation processes allows SHSOs to measure the effectiveness of educational initiatives and outreach efforts. Metrics may include the number of people trained, materials distributed, website traffic, social media engagement and changes in knowledge, attitudes and/or active ISA adoption rates. SHSOs should consider adding a few active ISA-related questions to statewide behavioral surveys to gauge public awareness and acceptance. Regular evaluation ensures that programs remain responsive and data-driven.

Beyond education, SHSOs can play a pivotal role in advancing active ISA through pilot programs. Partnering with state, municipal and contractor fleets to test different types of active ISA systems can provide valuable insights into effectiveness, driver acceptance and operational considerations. Collaborating with the insurance industry to explore potential discounts for active ISA-equipped fleets can further incentivize adoption. These pilots also generate local data on speeding, compliance and driver behavior – information that can inform policy recommendations and strengthen support for broader implementation.



When permitted, SHSOs can also assist lawmakers by providing research and empirical evidence on the benefits of active ISA, particularly in high-risk corridors and for addressing persistent speeders. SHSOs can also educate legislators about opportunities to deploy active ISA in fleet vehicles, authorize pilot projects for high-risk drivers, and establish privacy protections. Providing model legislation from [AAMVA](#) and the [SteerSafe Partnership](#) and examples of successful laws from other states can help lawmakers craft effective policies.

Importantly, SHSOs don't need to mandate ISA to advance its use. By funding pilots, improving the quality of speed data, incentivizing voluntary adoption, and building public and legislative confidence, SHSOs can position active ISA as a credible, scalable speed management tool – especially for novice drivers, fleets and persistent speeders.

With a clear roadmap in place – supported by targeted outreach, staff training, evaluation and pilot programs – SHSOs can begin taking concrete steps to advance active ISA in their states. The next consideration is how to resource these efforts. Understanding the funding landscape is essential for moving active ISA from planning to implementation.

ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

State Highway Safety Offices can use NHTSA or other U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) funds to support active ISA equipment and programs, but eligibility depends on the specific grant program, the nature of the project and its alignment with data-driven safety priorities. Under the Section 402

program, active ISA is an allowable expense when the equipment is necessary to address an identified safety problem. It is also important to note that ISA is a 3-star countermeasure in NHTSA's [Countermeasures That Work](#). However, equipment-only purchases are not 402-eligible, so SHSOs should confirm allowability before using federal funds for active ISA pilots. Where available, state funds may offer a more flexible, less restrictive option for supporting these pilots.

[Safe Streets and Roads for All \(SS4A\)](#) grants provide another potential funding avenue. These grants support technology-based safety projects and require applicants to measure the potential benefits through data collection and analysis. Temporary, small-scale active ISA demonstration projects that inform broader safety plans are explicitly mentioned as potentially eligible. While SHSOs can't apply for this grant, they can work with local jurisdictions to help incorporate active ISA into their regional or community speed-management plan.

[The Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation \(SMART\)](#) program is another competitive U.S. DOT grant that has funded demonstration projects using advanced technologies to improve transportation safety and efficiency. (SMART is not currently active but may be funded by Congress in the future.) For example, the expansion of New York City's active ISA pilot through a \$2.4 million SMART grant illustrated the program's applicability to active ISA initiatives.



CONCLUSION

Intelligent Speed Assistance represents one of the most promising opportunities to address a long-standing and pervasive traffic safety problem – speeding. With demonstrated potential to prevent crashes, reduce injuries and improve fuel efficiency, active ISA offers a practical, technology-driven pathway toward safe and more sustainable mobility. While challenges remain, particularly around public acceptance, system accuracy and regulator frameworks, SHSOs are uniquely positioned to help bridge these gaps.

Advancing active ISA will require sustained commitment, strategic partnerships and thoughtful investment in education, pilots and data-driven evaluation. SHSOs that take proactive steps today – by engaging key stakeholders, supporting demonstration projects and building public and legislative confidence – will lay the groundwork for broader adoption in the years ahead. In doing so, SHSOs reinforce their core mission of protecting lives and preventing injuries on our nation’s roadways.



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The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) is a nonprofit association representing the highway safety offices of states, territories, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. GHSA provides leadership and representation for the states and territories to improve traffic safety, influence national policy, enhance program management and promote best practices. Its members are appointed by their Governors to administer federal and state highway safety funds and implement state highway safety plans.