



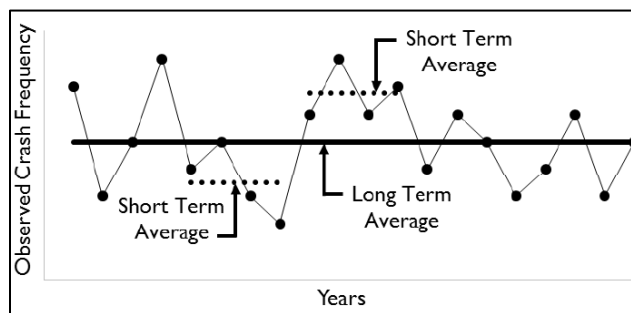
12-4-1 Safety Certification Process

April 2023

PURPOSE

Quantifying safety early in the project development process is key to determining safety improvement impacts to projects. Proposed safety improvements in a project must be balanced with other competing fiscal needs such as operational, environmental, and pavement factors. Historically, safety benefits have been assumed inherent, or “built-in”, to design policies and practices. The safety treatments were proposed at locations that were identified using the existing (observed) short-term crash data. This method was not representative of the long-term conditions of the subject location as it did not account for the Regression to the Mean (RTM) of crash data. RTM is defined as the natural variation of crash data. A location that was being reviewed could be analyzed when it was seeing a randomly high fluctuation of crashes, but the long-term period saw the location operating within typical safety norms. Likewise, a location could be overlooked from review due to it having a randomly low fluctuation of crashes. Figure 1 displays RTM bias.

Figure 1. Variation in short-term observed crash frequency to illustrate RTM bias



There are methods and tools available to quantify safety benefits in the development and analysis of alternatives in projects while accounting for RTM. This allows WisDOT to employ a PBPD approach. Within the safety evaluation of a project, to facilitate the safety comparison of alternatives, predictive crash modeling and an economic appraisal is used to compare the cost of crashes to the cost of roadway improvements. Predictive crash modeling is used to estimate crash frequencies and severities for alternatives on a project. Economic appraisal techniques are then used to assign average costs to the crashes for each alternative to monetize safety benefits. In this way, safety can be compared with other costs (construction, real estate) to evaluate alternatives. For a discussion on alternative viability, see [FDM 11-38-15.1](#).

The Safety Certification Process (SCP) follows the Highway Safety Manual's (HSM's) Road Safety Management Process (RSMP). This is a step-by-step process of determining whether safety improvements should be included on a project by quantifying alternatives, monetizing the resulting safety benefits, completing benefit-cost comparisons of the alternatives, and documenting decisions and judgements throughout the process.

This requires the analyst to use and document sound engineering judgement and experience based on specific project conditions, context, and modal priorities.

The Safety Certification Process is detailed in [FDM 11-38](#).

12-4-2 Highway Safety Improvement Program

April 2023

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a core Federal-aid program with the purpose of achieving a significant reduction in fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. Projects are identified by statewide screenings and WisDOT regional safety engineers on the state-owned system and by local agencies on the local system. All candidate projects must compile crash data and develop a proposed treatment strategy as part of a competitive application process. The applications are considered through a peer review process that involves statewide and regional safety engineering staff, as well as HSIP program management staff.

Federal HSIP guidance can be found on the [FHWA HSIP website](#). Wisconsin-specific HSIP information can be found on the [Wisconsin HSIP website](#). WisDOT [HSIP program guidelines](#) are available for internal use only.