



How to Improve Pedestrian Safety in San Francisco

Educational Campaigns



Traffic Safety Programs

SFDPH Community Health Education Section

http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/traffic_safety/

Educational Campaigns

Changing risky driving behaviors is not easy. However, it is doable through a comprehensive approach that focuses both on individual behaviors (e.g., accelerating at yellow signals, multi-tasking while driving, speeding, impaired safety judgment) and the environmental context that supports or encourages risky driving (visibility of traffic signal, public accountability, peer pressure to drive safely). A key focus for this approach is to change social norms by creating a social environment where unsafe driving is unacceptable. One of the ways to change social norms is through the use of messages and images in the media.

Public education campaigns raise awareness about the need for pedestrian and traffic safety; encourage safe behaviors; and contribute to changing attitudes and motivating individuals to adopt recommended behaviors.² Campaigns have traditionally relied on mass communication channels such as public service announcements (PSAs) on television, radio, newspapers, and billboards. Printed materials such as flyers, brochures, and posters are also common methods of informing the public about traffic safety. Increasingly, recent campaigns are taking advantage of technologies such as CD-ROMs and the World Wide Web as well as developing creative materials specific to the campaign.

Community groups and neighborhood associations can develop their own campaigns to educate people about pedestrian and traffic safety in their area. You don't have to work at a public relations firm to develop an effective campaign. Just keep in mind the following steps:

Do Some Research⁵

There are many different kinds of research to do before you implement your campaign. The following explains some of the necessary research that needs to be done.

Strategic Planning Research - You'd like to educate people on pedestrian safety but don't know what exactly to highlight. If that's the case, review the available data on pedestrian injuries. For example, you may find that speeding or DUI was a contributing factor in most of the injuries. You may find that most injuries oc-



curred to seniors or Asian-Americans. This kind of data will help define the main concept or theme of your campaign. Incorporating this data in all campaign materials also provides a compelling reason why people should pay attention.

Be sure to identify your target audience.⁵ People of diverse backgrounds have different preferences in educational material formats, channels of communication, and context. This is particularly relevant for racial and ethnic populations, who may have different languages and sources of information. In these cases, be sure to work with people with specific knowledge of the cultural characteristics, media habits, and language preferences of your target audience.

Direct translation of traffic safety information should be avoided. Rather, develop materials that reflect the cultural beliefs, ethnicity, primary language, education and income levels. Additional considerations include gender, age, sexual orientation, and attitudes toward transportation and traffic safety.

Determine what are the most useful media channels or educational formats based on the identified themes and target audience.⁵ Some media channels or educational formats are:

- Public service announcements
- Print, TV, or radio news coverage
- Brochures
- Posters
- Creative ideas of your own
- Billboards
- Websites
- Flyers
- Postcards

Be sure to take into account the preferences of your target audience.⁵ Your messages are most likely to reach your intended audience if you use the format most often used and trusted by them.

Needs Assessment⁵ – Collect information that estimates what is needed to design, distribute and evaluate your campaign. How much money will the campaign cost? What information should be included? What skills will be needed? These are essential pieces of information that will define the scope of your campaign.

Formative Evaluation⁵ - Now that you've identified the specific aspects of your campaign, you need to find out which messages will most likely be heard. Develop some sample slogans and ideas and test them out. Do informal "focus groups" and ask family, friends, and neighbors what they think. Make sure you test your materials on some people who are representatives of your primary target audience. Their feedback will prove to be invaluable. Be sure to incorporate their opinions, even if that means changing the focus of the campaign. Often, their opinions will reflect the best messages on which to base your educational efforts. They will also help identify what materials you should develop (i.e., PSAs, posters, flyers).

Research for any educational campaign is essential. Whatever you do, do not skip this step. Research you do will determine how well your campaign is created, distributed and received.

Develop Your Content

Once you have the main ideas, do some additional research to help shape the content of your educational campaign.⁵ For example, if family and friends tell you that they would drive safer after getting some expensive tickets, review the California Motor Vehicle Code. Identify the infractions related to pedestrians. Ask the DMV, SFPD, or California Highway Patrol how much each of those infractions cost.

Design Your Educational Materials

Design your educational campaign materials based on the strategic planning, needs assessment and formative evaluation you've done.⁵

The design of educational materials matters almost as much as its content. If a poster, brochure, or PSA is poorly designed, it's unlikely to draw anyone's attention. If possible, hire a public relations professional to help design your materials. Perhaps someone in your neighborhood or organization has these skills. If you do not have sufficient funds to hire a PR firm, they will often do some pro-bono work. If you are just developing print materials,



you can hire a graphic designer or find one that will volunteer his or her services. In the past few years, more and more people are learning to use publishing and design-related software (i.e., Microsoft Publisher, Photoshop, Illustrator, etc). You may learn how to use this software or ask knowledgeable people to help.

Do More Focus Groups

Once your educational materials are designed, get some samples and test them out.⁵ Ask people you know for their opinions. What is their reaction? What is the take-away message they get? Do they like the text and pictures used in the materials? Do they have any suggestions for improvements? It's best to get feedback now so you can incorporate edits before you distribute your materials.

For example, DPH developed street banners to encourage drivers to slow down. Before printing and hanging these expensive banners, DPH staff asked for input from Mission and Tenderloin residents. The feedback regarding the proposed picture of three generations of male Latinos was overwhelmingly negative. As a result, DPH changed the picture to one of three children, of both genders and different racial groups, which were better received. Asking for feedback saved DPH lots of time and money by avoiding having to redesign and reprint banners that would not have been appropriate for the target audience and unacceptable to community residents.

Distribute Materials

Now that your campaign is well researched and designed, publish the materials and distribute them to your target audience. If possible, kick off the launch of the campaign with a media event. Your message will reach more people if you have media coverage.

In fact, for small campaigns without a lot of money, publicity about the campaign can sometimes reach more people than the campaign itself. It can draw people's attention, which is then reinforced by the campaign materials (i.e., posters, postcards, etc). A news article might lead to an editorial or column. This can be further supported by a letter-writing campaign. Seeing an issue mentioned several times in a newspaper or on TV creates a strong sense that something of interest is happening.

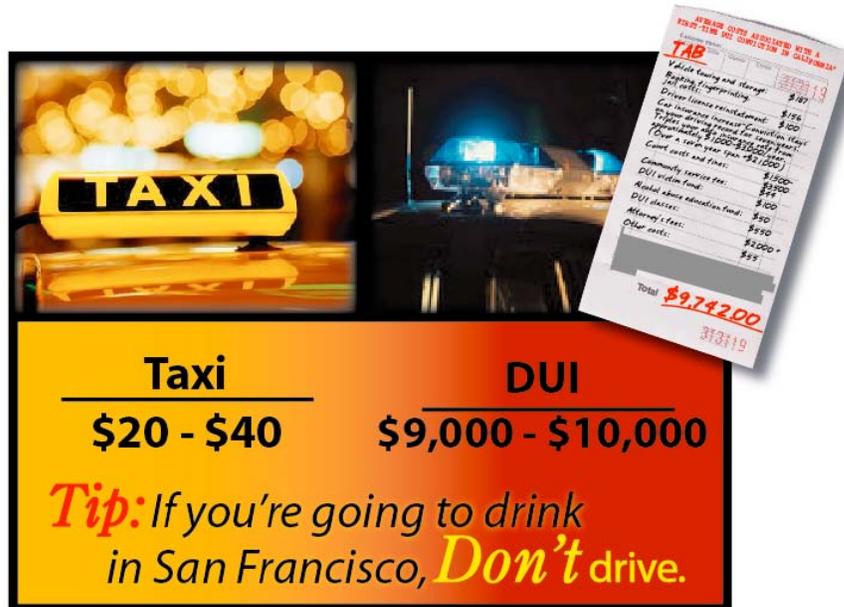
If you do get some press, be sure to keep copies of newspaper clippings and video of TV news. This will be useful for future media or community organizing efforts.

Evaluate Your Hard Work ⁵

Again, it's important to evaluate your efforts. At the very least, determine when, where, how often, and to whom campaign materials were distributed to, shown, or aired. This is called a *process evaluation*. You should also do an *outcome evaluation*. This is research designed to answer questions about the effects of your campaign, especially if there was any attitudinal or behavioral change as a direct result of your campaign. A simple survey before and after a campaign can give initial feedback. Research organizations such as universities may be able to assist with the outcome evaluation.

Case Study

The “Bar Nights” Campaign by the San Francisco Department of Public Health



Taxi	DUI
\$20 - \$40	\$9,000 - \$10,000

*Tip: If you're going to drink in San Francisco, **Don't** drive.*



The San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) sought to create an educational campaign to prevent driving under the influence (DUI). The challenge was to develop a DUI prevention campaign that was novel and appealing to the public.

To achieve this, DPH staff conducted focus groups with first-time DUI offenders and asked them what they learned from their experience that would most likely prevent others from doing the same. Overwhelmingly, focus group participants said that if they had known how much a DUI would cost them in terms of time, money and emotional strain, they would not have committed a DUI. They also said the slogan “Friends don’t let friends drive drunk” was stale and no longer effective. Based on this feedback, DPH launched the *Bar Nights* campaign, which educated residents on the financial and emotional risks of driving under the influence (DUI).

Specifically, the *Bar Nights* campaign reached bar-goers with strong visual messages about the total cost of a DUI. Volunteers went to bars and distributed cocktail napkins (right) to patrons. Printed on these napkins were estimates of the “hidden” costs of a DUI, including jail costs, license reinstatement, DUI classes, attorney's fees, and car insurance rates. The napkin highlights the total cost of a DUI.

Posters were also put up in bathrooms, which stated the cost of receiving a DUI versus the cost of taking a taxi (previous page). Volunteers also handed out wallet-sized laminated cards with the telephone numbers of all eleven taxicab companies in San Francisco (below).

AVERAGE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH A FIRST-TIME DUI CONVICTION IN CALIFORNIA*

Vehicle towing and storage:	\$187
Booking, fingerprinting, jail costs:	\$156
Driver license reinstatement:	\$100
Car insurance increase-Conviction stays on your driving record for seven years. Triples your auto insurance rate from approximately \$1,000-\$3,000/yr. (Over a seven year span +\$21,000)	\$3,500
Court costs and fines:	\$1,500
Community service fee:	\$44
DUI victim fund:	\$100
Alcohol abuse education fund:	\$50
DUI classes:	\$550
Attorney's fees:	\$2,000+
Other costs:	\$55

* Costs can vary widely from county to county and depending on circumstances surrounding the arrest. Sources: California Department of Motor Vehicles, California Office of Traffic Safety

TIP Total: **\$9,742.00**

If you're going to drink in San Francisco, DONT DRIVE!

Sponsored by:
San Francisco Department of Public Health
National Council on Alcoholism and other Drug Addictions-Bay Area

313119

TAXICABS	DUI: BIGGER HEADACHE THAN A HANGOVER
American 415.614.2000 National 415.648.4444	
Arrow 415.648.3181 Regents 415.487.1004	
City Wide Dispatch 415.920.0700 Town 415.401.8900	
DeSoto 415.970.1300 Veteran's 415.648.1313	
Luxor 415.282.4141 Yellow Cab 415.626.2345	
Black & White Checker 415.285.3800	
*If you are going to drink in San Francisco, PLEASE DON'T DRIVE	




This campaign was enthusiastically received by bar owners and their patrons. It also received media coverage in the SF Chronicle, the SF Examiner, KTVU Channel 2 news, and several radio stations. Because of this coverage, the prevention messages of the campaign were not just received by the bar patrons but by all those who watched the TV news, read the paper, or listened to the radio.



**City & County of San Francisco
Department of Public Health
Community Health Programs**

Find out more about our injury data, community-based projects, media campaigns, and general information at:
http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/traffic_safety/

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