MDOT Michigan Department of Transportation	**PROCEDURE** Process to Implement Policy and/or Standard	**IDENTIFIER** 10241	**EFFECTIVE DATE** 10/1/2025
		SUPERSEDES 11/12/2019	PAGE **1** OF **10**
RESPONSIBLE AREA: (Region/Bureau/Office)	Bureau of Field Services - TSMO		
SUBJECT:	Road Safety Audit Guidance		
RELATED POLICY and/or STANDARD:			
APPROVAL: (Sign/Date)			

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance document is to define Road Safety Audit (RSA) types, processes, and when they should be conducted. It is to be used to determine if an RSA is required or recommended based on project type and/or roadway characteristics, and the funding and timing of when an RSA should be performed relative to project scoping and/or design timelines.

Definitions

Project owner: The region/Transportation Service Center (TSC) managing the project and/or responsible for the roadway section. This would typically be the project manager listed in JobNet or the TSC Traffic & Safety engineer.

RSA program manager: MDOT Safety Programs representative responsible for coordinating/scheduling RSAs and managing the statewide consultant contract for the as-needed facilitation of road safety audits.

Full RSA: An RSA facilitated by an MDOT pre-qualified consultant. A full RSA follows the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) eight-step process described in the next section, concluding with a final report and a formal response from the project owner.

Internal RSA: An RSA facilitated by an MDOT employee (e.g. The region traffic & safety engineer). An internal RSA follows the FHWA eight-step process, except that Steps 5 and 6 are combined into the delivery of the RSA team’s findings to the project owner (such as a PowerPoint slide deck).

Contact the RSA program manager for content examples. A formal response from the project owner (Step 7) is required and sent to the RSA program manager.



Figure 1: The RSA eight-step process.

Introduction

A RSA is the formal safety performance examination of an existing or future road or intersection by an independent, multi-disciplinary team, offering a fresh and unbiased assessment. It qualitatively estimates and reports on potential road safety issues and identifies opportunities for improvements in safety for all road users. The aim of an RSA is to answer the following questions:

- What elements of the road may present a safety concern? To what extent? To which road users? Under what circumstances?
- What opportunities exist to eliminate or mitigate identified safety concerns?

RSA teams focus their review on four principal areas: geometry, operations, road users and environment. There are eight steps in the RSA process:

1. Identify project

2. Select RSA team
3. Conduct a start-up meeting
4. Perform field reviews
5. Conduct analysis and prepare report
6. Present findings to project owner
7. Prepare formal response
8. Incorporate findings

Timing

RSAs can be used in any phase of project development from planning and preliminary engineering to design. RSAs should be conducted at a time that enables the project owner to incorporate opportunities for safety improvement that an RSA team may identify into the project scope of work. In most cases, the opportune time to conduct an RSA is either prior to, during, or immediately after initial project scoping.

RSAs that are not associated with a programmed project should be performed at locations that the region/TSC is considering for an upcoming call for projects submittal (in any funding template) so that there is an opportunity to implement recommendations within a reasonable timeframe. This also allows for initial project scopes to incorporate accepted RSA team recommendations.

RSAs that are associated with a programmed project should be performed prior to holding the scope verification meeting, so there is an opportunity to update the project scope to incorporate RSA team recommendations, and to do so before substantial design work has begun.

Preparing for an RSA

Prior to performing an RSA, the project owner should provide the following documentation/information (as applicable) to the RSA facilitator for distribution to the RSA team.

Physical limits of the RSA (all areas to be reviewed by the team)
Adjacent project information
Traffic signal information
Studies (safety studies, traffic impact studies, operations studies, previous RSAs, etc.)
As-built plans
Most recent five years of available crash data
Traffic volumes and/or counts
Documented first responder experiences

Previous safety analysis
Previous project plans or alternatives suggested
Political concerns
Past public meetings and outcomes
Other information that may be useful to the RSA team.

Performing/completing an RSA

Step1 – Identify the project

- **Responsibility:** Project owner
- **Full RSA:** The project owner will complete Form 3767 and provide to the RSA project manager, with a copy to the region TSO, at least eight weeks prior to the desired date of the start-up meeting (Step 3).
- **Internal RSA:** The project owner will email the region traffic & safety engineer, with a carbon copy to the RSA project manager, requesting an Internal RSA be performed.

Step 2 – Select RSA team

- **Responsibility:** RSA project manager
- **Full RSA:** The RSA project manager will obtain a consultant using the as-needed contract for facilitation of RSAs. Once the consultant is obtained, the RSA project manager will assemble a full RSA team made up of staff from MDOT and from the selected consultants that have received RSA training. MDOT team member selections are based upon availability and supervisor approval.
- **Internal RSA:** The region traffic & safety engineer will assemble an RSA team made up of MDOT staff. Staff can be internal to the region, from other regions, or from central office at the discretion of the region traffic & safety engineer. The RSA project manager should also be invited to participate as a team member.

RSA teams (full and internal) should consist of the facilitator and 3-5 team members.

Step 3 – Conduct start-up meeting

Responsibility: Collaboration between the project owner, RSA program manager, and the RSA facilitator to identify an appropriate date, time and location.

Full RSA: For this meeting and for the findings meeting (Step 6 present findings to the project owner), the project owner's responsibilities are as follows:

- Reserve space (conference room, virtual room format, etc.) with presentation capabilities for the RSA start-up and findings meetings; as well as for the RSA team to work throughout the time of an in-person RSA.
- Supply an MDOT van for the RSA team to use in the field.
- Invite regional attendees to the start-up and findings meetings:
  - Local and regional MDOT staff have project knowledge (Design, Traffic & Safety, Operations, Maintenance, Construction, etc.)
  - State Police/EMS
  - Local police
  - Transit/railroad representatives
  - County/city/township staff/engineers/planners
  - Other stakeholders (these are not public meetings)

Internal RSA: The MDOT facilitator and the project owner will coordinate a start-up meeting date and time. The project owner will secure a meeting location site and will invite relevant staff to attend.

During the start-up meeting, provide a brief overview of the Safe System Approach (SSA), as the elements and principles need to be considered in the field review.

Step 4 – Perform Field Reviews

Responsibility: RSA team.

Full RSA: The consultant-facilitated RSA team will coordinate the timing of the field reviews based on peak hours, local operations, identified times of concern, etc. Full RSAs should include field reviews in both daylight and dark conditions.

Internal RSA: The MDOT-facilitated RSA team will coordinate the timing of the field review (generally one field review between the start-up meeting in the morning and the findings meeting in the afternoon). Additional review times (such as nighttime) are at the discretion of the regions.

Step 5 – Conduct Analysis and Prepare Report

Responsibility: RSA team

Full and internal RSA: During the field reviews (between location observations), the RSA team will meet to discuss safety issues observed and identified and assign a risk category with discussion and mitigation suggestions.

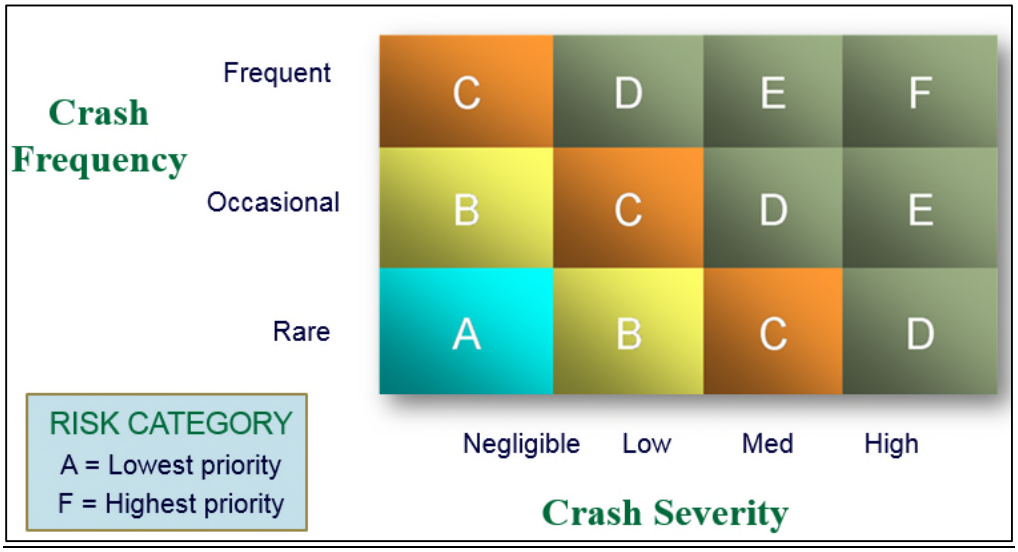


Figure 2: RSA risk category matrix.

The RSA team assigns a risk to each identified safety issue by using the matrix shown in Figure 2.

For example, a safety issue that occurs frequently and results in high severity is rated as 'F' and is considered the highest priority. The RSA team then provides short-to-long-term and low-to-high-cost suggestions to mitigate the identified crash risks.

The analysis should consider the safety of all roadway users and viewed through the SSA lens. Suggestions that are based on the SSA are proactive, introduce redundancy in the system, and promote shared responsibility between all stakeholders with the goal of eliminating fatalities and serious injuries.

Step 6 – Present findings to the project owner

Responsibility: RSA team lead by the RSA facilitator

- **Full RSA:** The consultant facilitator will conduct the findings meeting with assistance from the RSA team. This typically consists of a presentation outlining the findings, risk scores, and suggested mitigations as they relate to the SSA. The formatting and supporting text for a final report will be developed following this meeting. While a final report will not be completed for the findings meeting, the main content will be developed.
- **Internal RSA:** The MDOT facilitator and RSA team will conduct the findings meeting which typically consists of a PowerPoint presentation outlining the findings, risk scores, and

suggested mitigations as they relate to the SSA. This presentation will serve as the final product from the RSA team.

Step 7 – Prepare formal response

- **Responsibility:** Project owner

Full RSA: After Step 6 (Present findings to the project owner) a final report is completed with the RSA team reviewing and approving. This report includes highlighting positive features observed currently at the location, defining a risk category for each safety issue identified, and suggesting possible mitigation, both short and long-term, for the identified safety issues. The lists of comments, observations and recommendations that were not considered by the audit team, in spreadsheet format, should also be submitted. All findings should correlate to the SSA elements. The final report is delivered to the project owner (for the project files) and a formal response from the owner to the RSA program manager, stating how the recommendations will be addressed, is required.

Internal RSA: A formal response is required.

Step 8 – Incorporate findings

- **Responsibility:** Project owner
- **Full RSA:** Implementation of the recommendations in the RSA report is left to the project owner's discretion. Reasons for not incorporating recommendations should be documented in the formal response. The cost of changes to an already-programmed project based on incorporation of the RSA findings will be borne by the project.

Internal RSA: Implementation is left to the project owner's discretion. If accepting a recommendation increases the cost of a project that is already programmed, ensure the appropriate system manager(s) apply additional funds to the project or review the project scope.

The documentation of the RSA (final report, formal response, etc.) will officially be kept with the project files owned by the project owner. A copy will be kept with the MDOT RSA project manager for Safety Programs use.

Eligibility

RSAs (full and internal) should be reserved for locations that have a programmed project or are being considered for project scoping, and where there is opportunity to reduce or prevent traffic fatalities and serious injuries based upon any of the following criteria:

The location has experienced multiple fatal and/or serious injury crashes within the most recent five-year period.
The location is at risk for fatal and/or serious injury (severe) crashes based on:
Existing roadway attributes that typically yield severe crashes, and/or
An existing crash pattern that has the potential to yield severe injuries in the future, and/or
Known/reported near miss crash patterns; as determined by the project owner.

Observed crashes at the location are greater than predicted crashes based on a Highway Safety Manual analysis.

Additionally, full RSAs should be reserved for locations and/or projects that fit at least one of these criteria:

- Known or anticipated complexity related to road design and operations.
- Known or anticipated public controversy.
- Known or anticipated political interest.
- Uncertainty amongst region staff regarding appropriate safety treatment(s) selection.

The criteria listed above for both full and internal RSAs are not intended as conditions for **requiring** an RSA to be performed, but rather to ensure that RSAs are performed at appropriate locations and at an appropriate time. The decision to perform or not to perform an RSA for a specific project or location is made by the project owner.

Types of projects (either already programmed or being scoped/considered for future programming) that may be good candidates for an RSA include, but are not limited to:

- Road reconstruction or rehabilitation.
- Pavement functional enhancements (i.e., mill and resurface).
- Safety and/or operational improvements.
- Non-motorized improvements.

Funding

Traffic & Safety will fund up to seven full RSAs per fiscal year out of a statewide job number programmed in the Traffic & Safety – Safety Programs template. The intent is to fund one full RSA in each region per fiscal year out of the statewide job number and for regions to identify their project or location as part of the previous year's safety call for projects process.

Regions may perform additional RSAs (full or internal) by utilizing Traffic & Safety – Safety Programs template region targets, programming an early preliminary engineering or scoping phase within any funding template, or via other methods.

RSA training

As previously stated, the RSA team will be typically staffed by internal MDOT staff that have completed internal RSA training. This training will be offered by the MDOT RSA project manager typically under an as-needed contract facilitated by a qualified consultant.

Training will be coordinated with the FHWA Resource Center to maintain the most recent content. For example, the addition of the SSA.

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§407. Discovery and admission as evidence of certain reports and surveys

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, reports, surveys, schedules, lists, or data compiled or collected for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, or planning the safety enhancement of potential accident sites, hazardous roadway conditions, or railway-highway crossings, pursuant to sections 130, 144, and 152 of this title or for the purpose of developing any highway safety construction improvement project which may be implemented utilizing Federal-aid highway funds shall not be subject to discovery or admitted into evidence in a Federal or State court proceeding or considered for other purposes in any action for damages arising from any occurrence at a location mentioned or addressed in such reports, surveys, schedules, lists, or data.

(Added Pub. L. 100–17, title I, §132(a), Apr. 2, 1987, 101 Stat. 170 ; amended Pub. L. 102–240, title I, §1035(a), Dec. 18, 1991, 105 Stat. 1978 ; Pub. L. 104–59, title III, §323, Nov. 28, 1995, 109 Stat. 591 .)

Amendments

1995-Pub. L. 104–59 inserted "or collected" after "data compiled".
1991-Pub. L. 102–240 substituted "Discovery and admission" for "Admission" in section catchline and "subject to discovery or admitted into evidence in a Federal or State court proceeding" for "admitted into evidence in Federal or State court" in text.

Effective Date of 1991 Amendment

Amendment by Pub. L. 102–240 effective Dec. 18, 1991, and applicable to funds authorized to be appropriated or made available after Sept. 30, 1991, and, with certain exceptions, not applicable to funds appropriated or made available on or before Sept. 30, 1991, see section 1100 of Pub. L. 102–240, set out as a note under **section 104 of this title**.