

# **BESAFETOGETHER**

## **Guidance for Campaign Engagement**

### **Policymakers | Media | Community Groups**

IBTTA's Global Road Safety Week is an opportunity for members of our industry to engage with policymakers, media, and community groups to discuss the Be Safe Together campaign and the tolling industry's commitment to safety.

There are many ways to engage with these stakeholder groups during Global Road Safety Week. Some examples are:

- Invite policymakers, media, and advocates to your Road Safety Week events.
- Host tours of your operations center and take a ride on the road to demonstrate your safety projects.
- Offer to meet with community groups and their members to discuss your organization's road safety work, the campaign, and how you are making the road safer for all road users.
- Encourage policymakers and community groups to share Be Safe Together campaign materials on social media, with their constituents, and members.

Here is practical guidance for talking about road safety with different audiences, such as your state delegate, local news station, or a chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

#### **Meeting with Policymakers**

Policymakers and their staff have an interest in the performance of local toll roads and investments in safety. They will be interested to learn about your approach to safety, recent and upcoming projects designed to make the road safer and more resilient, global tolling industry best practices in safety that can be adopted locally, and the Be Safe Together campaign, which is dedicated to keeping all road users safe. Policymakers will also be eager to discuss how the tolling industry and government can work together to increase road safety.

Here is guidance for meeting with policymakers, including City or County Councilmembers, Mayors, State Senators and Representatives, state DOT leaders, and Congressional district staff.

#### ***Sample Meeting Agenda***

1. Introductions

2. Who We Are
  - a. Background on your toll road and new safety procedures and projects
3. Why We Care
  - a. Statistics on traffic accidents and fatalities
  - b. Personal stories
4. The Tolling Industry's Commitment to Safety
  - a. Case studies
5. Working Together to Be Safe Together
  - a. Partnering together to advance the campaign

### ***Meeting Guidance***

1. Prepare in Advance
  - Identify the policymaker you wish to meet and follow the instructions on their website to request a meeting. Meetings are typically held at the policymaker's office, but you may wish to invite them to your office for a tour of the operations center and new safety innovations on your roads.
  - Find out if the policymaker has recently been in the media, and for what reason(s). That may tell you something about his or her current priorities and possibility allow you a hook to talk about the campaign.
  - Do enough research to understand the policymaker's interests, positions, and voting record on road safety. Have they made a comment on road safety?
  - Anticipate the kinds of questions or concerns that will be raised and have clear answers ready.
  - Know your message. Have your talking points down cold. Practice making your case clearly and quickly – your elevator speech.
  - Your meeting is likely to be short, 10 to 15 minutes. If there are several of you, work out in advance who will speak first and what they will address. Don't waste people's time with long or repetitive presentations. Everyone may not be able to speak.
  - Bring supporting materials, including the Be Safe Together Fact Sheet and Case Studies, to leave behind with the policymaker and staff.
  - Treat staff well, they will be doing the bulk of the work.
2. Make the Visit Count:
  - Introduce yourself and start on a positive note. Is there a recent vote or public statement you can mention? Did he or she recently get re-elected, just have a baby or granddaughter?

- State your position, concerns, or requests clearly and directly. Bolster your facts with personal stories about how the issue affects the state or community.
  - If you don't understand your elected official's opinion or the status of the issue, ask for an explanation.
  - If you're not sure how to answer one of their questions, say so honestly, promise to get the information quickly, and then be sure to follow through with staff.
  - Leave several copies of your materials and contact information.
  - Be sure to thank the policymaker and staff for spending time with you.
3. Following Up:
- Be sure to write or call the elected official(s) and staff after your visit to thank them for their time.
  - If they agreed to take any actions, remind and thank them—and offer your assistance if appropriate.
  - If you promised to get them any additional information or answers to questions, do so promptly.
  - Be sure to share any information or insights you gained from the meeting with your board, colleagues, and IBTTA if appropriate.
  - Maintain a relationship with people you met with by sending updates on your activities.

### **Calling/Writing Your Elected Officials**

If you are unable to meet with your elected official or staff, you can still call them and leave a message about Be Safe Together. Policymakers closely track what types of comments they receive from constituents, so leaving a message is one way to ensure that your opinion is noted.

#### ***Sample Message***

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a constituent and toll road employee and I'm calling on you to support the International Bridge Tunnel and Turnpike Association's Be Safe Together global road safety campaign. Every day, I see firsthand how our work to maintain and improve our roads makes people safer, but I also see reckless driving behaviors that put everyone in danger, including other drivers and road workers. I wish drivers would think of everyone on the road as part of a broader community of road users and drive with empathy. Resist the temptation to speed, put the phone away, focus on the road, and buckle up. These little things add up to safety for everyone. Please join me to Be Safe Together.

#### ***Guidance for phone calls and letters/emails***

- Unless you have a strong personal relationship with your elected official, you aren't likely to get through on a phone call, but it's worth asking. If you can't reach the elected official directly, ask to speak with the staff member who works on transportation issues.
- Thoughtful, well written individual letters have a greater impact than a form letter or pre-printed postcard. If you're able to get a number of members or customers to write their own letters explaining why this campaign is important to them, that message will be heard.
- Personal stories about the importance of road safety may be particularly salient.
- You can also gather multiple signatures on a single letter. A sign-on letter can be useful in demonstrating the breadth and diversity of support in your community for our campaign.

## **Media Engagement**

Speaking with the media is a meaningful way to promote Be Safe Together. Sharing why road safety is important for your toll road or business, for your community or yourself, could make for a compelling story or segment on the news.

Remember that your lived experience is interesting! Let the reporter know what you have seen, and why road safety matters to you and your industry colleagues.

### ***General Media Tips 101***

- Highlight any data you have about how your road safety innovations have helped save lives.
- Be prepared with several examples of your organization's innovations, such as new signage or road speed sensors.
- Identify people in your organization who have personal stories or anecdotes they would be willing to share.
- Remember to reference Be Safe Together and Global Road Safety Week.
- Don't be afraid to repeat your talking points to make sure the reporter takes note of them as they craft the story.

### ***Educating the Media***

- Assess what reporters in your community are covering transportation issues. Don't be shy to pitch a story idea about the Be Safe Together campaign. Make it compelling, timely and provide as much background and information to make it easy on them.
- When you reach out to blogs and bloggers who are associated with mainstream journalism outlets—newspapers or magazines—you should treat them as you

- would other journalists. Introduce yourself and your organization, encourage them to cover your Global Road Safety Week events, and consider you a source for future stories about road safety.
- Pass along anecdotes, bits of inside information, and other material that might not make it into a straight news story but will help them fill out the blog.
  - Many blogs that are not affiliated with major news organizations also function at least partially as news organizations, producing or compiling links to other news organizations. But they also include a lot of commentary and provide opportunities for you to reach their audiences by posting op-eds or comments.
  - Many state capitals and other urban areas have influential blogs covering state and local politics and community issues. Among their readers will be people you are trying to influence: journalists, public officials, and people who work for public officials or government agencies.
  - Always take the high road and don't get combative, instead using facts to support your statements and message.

### ***Preparing for Television Interviews***

- Before accepting a television interview, study and learn about the reporter and station conducting the interview.
- Consider each interview request carefully. Will the interview help or hurt your cause? Does the reporter or station have a history of covering road safety? Do they have a "gotcha" mentality? Is the reporter a news reporter or more entertainment news?
- Once you have agreed to an interview, pick a time that is convenient to you, when you are not rushed and are fully prepared.
- Hold a meeting prior to the interview with communications staff. Watch what stories the reporter has covered in the past to get a sense of his or her style and tone. Flesh out two or three of your talking points that you want to deliver and be prepared to stick to them, repeating over and over if necessary.
- Be sure you are well groomed for the interview. You may need a little make up to appear your best on television. No flashy patterns, jewelry, or accessories to distract attention from you and your message.
- During the interview, keep your answers short. Include only as much detail as you need to answer the question or get your point across.
- Smile! A huge part of how people take in information from television is visual—what you say may leave less of an impression than how you say it. You want to come across as warm and likeable to the audience watching.
- Posture and eye contact, if you're standing and talking to a reporter while being filmed by a cameraman, look at and talk to the reporter. If you're in a studio being interviewed by someone in another location, look directly into the camera.

- When seated, don't lean or slump back in your chair, leaning slightly forward is best. Keep hand gestures to a minimum and away from your face.
- Keep cool if the conversation gets contentious or unpleasant and stick to your message.
  - Most importantly, don't ever assume that the camera or microphone is off.

### ***Submit a Letter to the Editor***

One opportunity to proactively share your story with the media, such as your local newspaper, is via a Letter to the Editor (LTE).

#### ***The Purpose and Requirements***

- An LTE is a letter sent to a publication about issues of concern from its readers and intended for publication.
- The purpose of submitting an LTE is most often to either agree or disagree with the position of a news publication's editorials and/or news articles.
- LTE's can also be submitted to raise and comment on a current issue being debated by a local, regional or national governing body and of importance to the news publication's community. Often, the LTE urges elected officials to make a decision based on the LTE's point of view.
- LTEs are addressed to the news publication's editors, Dear Editor, and between 200-350 words, depending on the publication's requirements. It can be sent via regular mail or electronically to the news publication's particular address.

Below you will find a template LTE for Be Safe Together. We encourages you to adapt this to share your experiences in your own words.

Letter: **Why we should drive with empathy.**

Dear Editor,

Last year, more than 40,000 people died on American roads. This is personal for far too many of us who have had a parent, sibling, or close friend lose their life on the road. These preventable tragedies underscore the need for awareness and empathy on the road.

Everyone on the road, drivers, passengers, and road workers alike, deserves your empathy and respect. I urge every driver to adopt a new mindset and drive with empathy. We, as a diverse road community, must recognize our shared responsibility.

Avoid speeding, stay off your phone, and give space to road workers. These acts can save lives. The International Bridge, Tunnel, and Turnpike Association's Be Safe Together

campaign promotes safe driving habits. Supported by global organizations, its message is clear: your vigilance can make a life-saving difference.

[PERSONAL ROAD SAFETY ANECDOTE].

Let's remember to practice empathy on our roads to Be Safe Together!

Best,  
Your Name

### **Meeting with Community Groups**

Another great opportunity to promote Be Safe Together and road safety more generally is to meet with other relevant stakeholder groups, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Collaborations are a powerful tool for showing the breadth of support for the campaign. Additionally, these groups can validate your organization's efforts to keep the roads safe through different innovations or initiatives.

If there are any community groups you have worked with previously, contact them about Global Road Safety Week. Invite them to any events or activations that you are hosting. Ask them if they are willing to join your organization in promoting Be Safe Together.

### ***Sample Introduction to Community Group Leadership***

Hello,

My name is \_\_\_\_, and I work with \_\_\_\_. To promote road safety, we're supporting the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association's (IBTTA) Be Safe Together global road safety campaign. The campaign calls on drivers to drive with empathy and recognize the shared responsibility we hold as a diverse road community.

We are planning to showcase our organization's newest road safety innovation during IBTTA's first Global Road Safety Week June 24-28, and would be honored if you could join us on June \_\_\_\_ for an event.

Our organizations have a shared commitment to making all of our roads safer. We would like to discuss how we might collaborate on programming or initiatives to raise awareness and educate current and future drivers about the actions they can take to be safe on the roads, for everyone.

We look forward to working with you.

Best,

Your Name