Top Ten Questions Asked of Traffic and Safety

1. How many people have to die or be hurt before something will be done about it?
    a. Safety is the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) top priority. If we can pinpoint the why, then we can work on the remedy. It's very difficult to engineer for bad driving behavior. Like many states Michigan has adopted a vision of Toward Zero Deaths (TZD). As part of this vision MDOT wants to change driver behavior by educating the public on the scope of the issue. Posting fatality messages on digital message signs is one simple and inexpensive way MDOT can contribute to that effort. To learn more about TZD please visit MDOT's TZD website: www.michigan.gov/zerodeaths.

2. Why won't you lower the speed limit to make traffic slow down?
    a. The safest speed is what the majority of traffic is traveling at. MDOT works with the Michigan State Police using the 85th percentile method. This method has shown that 85 percent of drivers adhere to properly established speed limits which they feel are reasonable, comfortable and safe for conditions. Posting speed limits lower than the 85th percentile does not result in voluntary motorist compliance unless there is strict, continuous and visible enforcement. With limited resources, these areas are not always enforced. They will be consistently violated and will create disregard for speed limits in general. Go to Setting Realistic Speed Limits for more on speed limits.

3. People are driving too fast down my road. What are you going to do about it?
    a. MDOT is not an enforcement agency. We design, build and maintain the roads. If you observe people breaking the law, please contact your local law enforcement. They can target those exceeding the speed limit.

4. What's the deal with the cable median barriers, and why don't you put them in the middle of the median?
    a. Cable median barrier saves lives and is more than 95 percent effective in stopping crossover crashes. They harness and absorb a lot of the vehicle's energy upon impact. The cables are not installed in the middle because that's where water collects, and the constant freezing and thawing would destroy their foundations. Also, the median slopes may be too steep to allow the cable to perform as

intended. For more information on cable median barrier please visit the median cable guardrail website: www.michigan.gov/cableguardrail

5. Can you please install a traffic signal at this intersection to solve all the issues?
    a. Traffic signals don't always solve the problem. They typically reduce angle-type crashes, but increase rear-end crashes. Detailed traffic studies are completed to determine the best type of traffic control devices. An unwarranted signal can result in disobedience of signal indications, the use of less adequate routes to avoid traffic signals, and create excessive delays often greater than intersections under stop sign control. TRAFFIC SIGNALS A Guide for Their Proper Use explains further the steps taken in determining the need for a traffic signal.

6. Who has the right of way when merging on to the freeway?
    a. The Michigan Vehicle Code states: A driver merging onto a freeway must yield to traffic on the freeway. For more driving information see the Secretary of State's What Every Driver Must Know.

7. Why are there so many crashes at this location?
    a. Areas with the highest traffic volumes are likely to have more crashes. We closely study areas of concern and implement any necessary remedy within available resources. Visit our Safety website to learn more about MDOT's safety initiatives.

8. I do not care for roundabouts. Why are you constructing them?
    a. Roundabouts have statistically proven themselves around the world. They greatly increase safety and improve mobility with decreased delay and congestion. The challenge for motorists is unfamiliarity. When selected and designed correctly, roundabouts can handle a high volume of traffic, including commercial trucks and large emergency vehicles. Roundabouts can cost less than traditional signalized intersections. For more about roundabout please visit our roundabout website: www.michigan.gov/roundabout.

9. Why does MDOT replace "perfectly good" signs?
    a. During the day that traffic sign may look fine but at night it may not provide the retroreflectivity you need to see and understand its message. Retroreflective signs are especially beneficial to older drivers. By 2030, one in five drivers will be age 65 or older. A 65-year-old's eyes need eight times the amount of light a 25-year-old's does. Bright, highly reflective traffic signs are more visible at night and can reduce nighttime crashes by helping older drivers – and motorists of all ages – to quickly read and react to commands and information on the signs. The reason why we replace traffic signs and their supports is further explained in MDOT's TRAFFIC SIGNING PROGRAM: WHY TRAFFIC SIGNS ARE REPLACED.

10. Why can’t signs prohibiting Jake Brakes be placed along state highways?
    a. The reason that "No Jake Brake" signs are not used is the inability to enforce the sign. Michigan State Police has indicated that trucks are not prohibited from having and using engine brakes. The Michigan Vehicle Code does address exhaust noise, which is not an engine brake but is related to vehicle condition. Police cannot enforce engine brake use because it is not in violation of state law. It is almost impossible for an officer to prove in court that a driver was using his brakes and not simply letting off the accelerator. Putting up signs does not always address the situation of enforcement if it is not possible. A local noise ordinance may be enforceable.