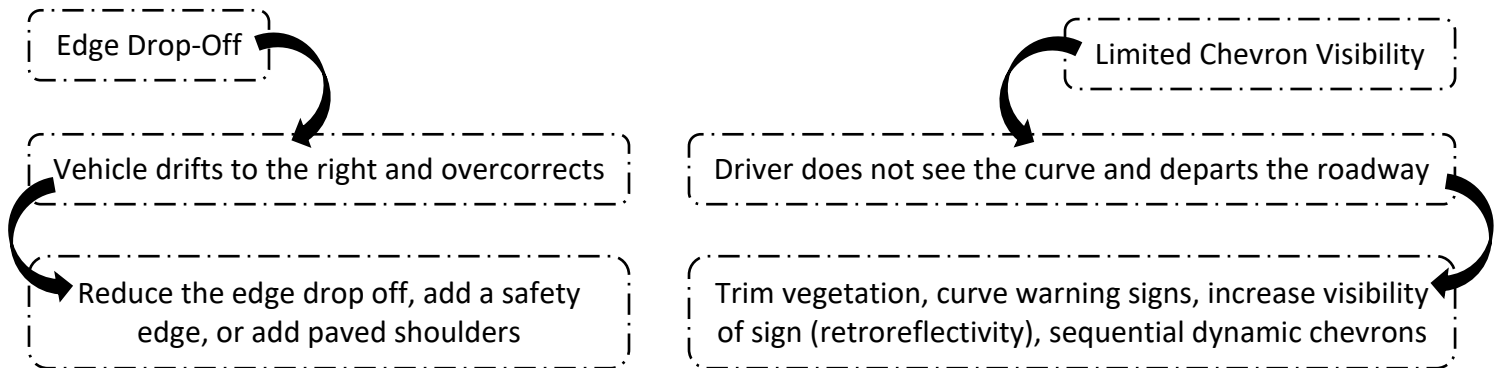


Road Safety Assessments

Reading the roadway is important to identify potential safety issues. Informally, one can read the roadway each time they drive it. To formally read the roadway, complete a process called a Road Safety Assessment (RSA).

To read the roadway informally, imagine yourself in the driver's seat. Ask yourself three questions:

- ① What safety issues do you see?
- ② What are the consequences if this issue is not addressed?
- ③ What countermeasures can we take to reduce crashes?



To read the roadway formally, complete a Road Safety Assessment, sometimes called a Road Safety Audit. A Road Safety Assessment (RSA) is defined by FHWA as a “formal safety performance evaluation of an existing or future road or intersection by an independent, multidisciplinary team.”¹

RSAs are...

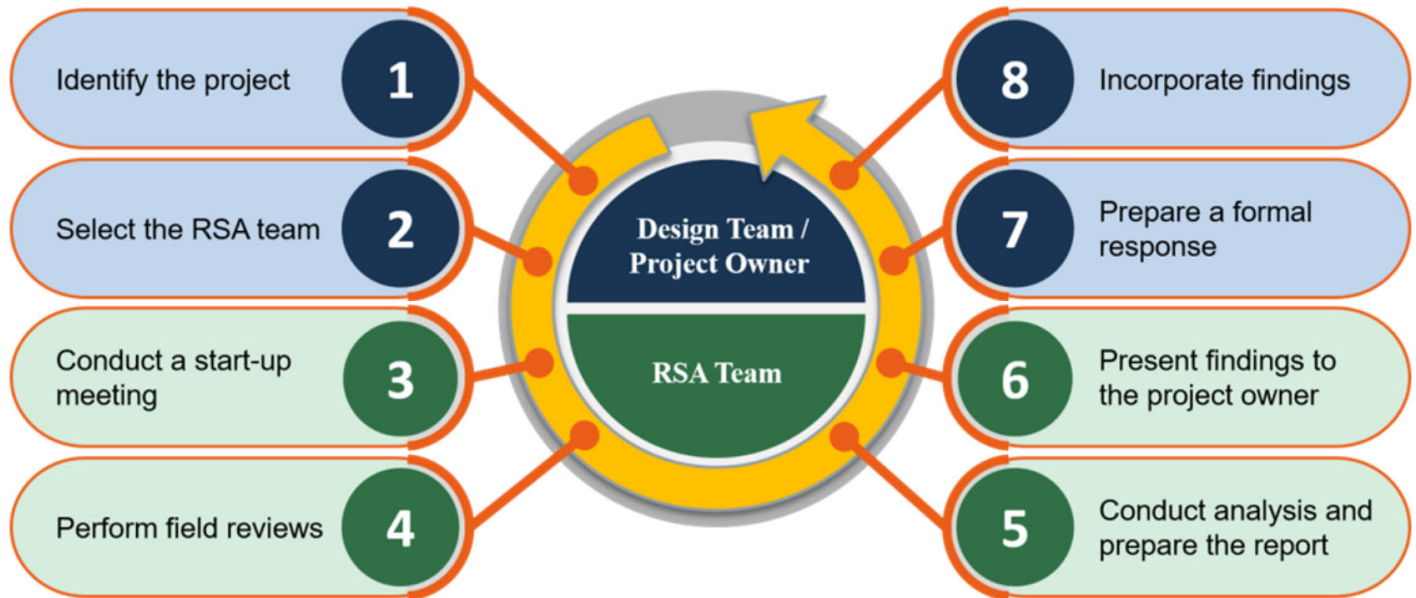
- Focused on road safety
- Formal examinations
- Proactive
- Performed by an independent, qualified team
- Considerate of all road users
- Qualitative

RSAs are not...

- Evaluations of roadway design
- Compliance standards checks
- A means of ranking sites
- A means of rating design options
- A redesign
- A crash investigation
- Safety reviews

Road Safety Assessments are different from traditional safety reviews in that they are performed by a multidisciplinary team independent from the project, consider all road users, and account for road user capabilities and limitations. RSAs generate a formal report, and a formal response is essential.

The RSA Process



- ① **Set the parameters** of the project, including the scope, schedule, team requirements, tasks, format of report, and response report expectations.
- ② **Identify** at least three **team members**, one of whom is a local representative, with varying expertise and skillsets. Potential team members include:
 - Road safety specialist | Traffic operations engineer | Road design engineer | Local contact person
 - Maintenance worker | Law enforcement officer or EMS personnel | Transit operator | ITS expert
 - Pedestrian or bike specialist | Commercial vehicle operator | Leader of local organization
- ③ During the pre-assessment meeting, **review scope and objectives** and delegate responsibilities.
- ④ **Review project data** to identify preliminary concerns. **Review site** to confirm issues addressed in data, considering all times of day, movements, volumes, different users, etc.
- ⑤ Finalize the safety issues found, evaluate risk, and **prioritize concerns**. Suggest solutions to concerns.
- ⑥ Orally report findings to project owner and **address feedback/questions**.
- ⑦ **Formally respond** with actions outlined: agree with suggestions and commit to implement; disagree with suggestions and commit to alternative; and chose not to implement improvement due to project constraints.
- ⑧ **Ensure** that the agreed upon safety improvements are implemented timely.

1. FHWA Road Safety Audit Guidelines, Federal Highway Administration. 2006.
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsa/guidelines/documents/FHWA_SA_06_06.pdf
2. Improving Access to Transit Using Road Safety Audits, Federal Highway Administration. 2016.
<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsa/resources/docs/fhwasa16120.pdf>