



New Road Safety Professional Certification Now Available!

BY TERCIA W. WILSON



Apply Now! The application deadline for the October 2019 exam period is August 6. Visit www.tpcb.org for more information.

This article originally appeared in The Mid-Week Peek, the newsletter of the National Association of Women Highway Safety Leaders (NAWHSL). Several time-sensitive items have been updated for clarification.

The Transportation Professional Certification Board (TPCB), in collaboration with a wide array of transportation and safety-related organizations in the United States and Canada, announced the availability of a new Road Safety Professional (RSP) Certification® last year. The certification became available on October 1, 2018. The goals of the RSP certifications are to recognize road safety as a profession, to establish a recognized level of practice and knowledge, and to incentivize safety education.

Who is the Transportation Profession Certification Board?

The Transportation Profession Certification Board (TPCB) was established in 1998 to provide a mechanism to create and administer professional certifications for those involved in the practice of transportation. While the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) helped to found the TPCB, the TPCB is a separate corporation with an independent governance structure. The first certification area established was the Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE) in 1999. Today there are more than 3,000 PTOEs. The second certification area established was the Professional Transportation Planner (PTP) in 2007. Today, there are more than 400 PTPs. Based on a survey of transportation professionals, the TPCB identified road safety as the area with the highest need for establishment of a new certification.

Why was this certification program developed?

With more than 40,000 lives lost annually on highways in the United States and Canada, and the growing attention on improving public safety through initiatives such as Toward Zero Deaths (TZD), Vision Zero, and the Road to Zero, the RSP certification program represents an important step forward for the safety profession. The RSP certification provides for transportation professionals to establish their competency in providing for the safety of the traveling public.

The need for a certification program has long been recognized by those involved in Highway Safety Workforce Development at the state and federal levels. With numerous retirements and the introduction of many new tools and technologies, there is a need to enhance the skills of those currently working in road safety and to more formally establish the road safety profession as a science-based profession. Needs identified for the certification program included: 1) building professional capacity; 2) producing capable and competent professionals; 3) implementing new tools and technologies; 4) learning to work in multidisciplinary teams; and 5) utilizing evidence-based approaches.

Further, improving road safety performance demands that decision-makers at all levels be fully informed of the safety impacts of their decisions and that they have the support of qualified and knowledgeable professionals. In an era where the United Nations established a Decade of Action on road safety to combat the 1.25 million lives lost annually around the world in road crashes, and where governments in the United States and Canada are rapidly embracing a “Toward Zero Deaths” and “Vision Zero” philosophy to address the 40,000+ lives lost each year in these countries, the development of this certification is imperative.

How many people have been certified to date?

According to Jeffrey Paniati, P.E. (F) Executive Director of ITE and TPCB Executive Director, which founded the RSP Certification Program, the first RSP examination was given in October 2018. A total of 215 applicants took the Level 1 examination during this test window, and 205 (94 percent) successfully passed the exam. Paniati said, “This was a very high pass rate, but not unexpected since the first set of candidates were both highly motivated and highly qualified.” The second exam period was in February 2019 and 28 more people obtained the certification. Along with 11 subject matter experts (SMEs) who created the Level 1 examination and were subsequently grandfathered into the RSP, there are now 244 RSPs.

What are the benefits of certification?

There are many benefits of certification. For individuals, preparation for certification examinations helps to keep you updated on relevant and current topics in safety. Certification can increase job security, advance career development, and help secure a higher salary. Having a RSP certification can also help demonstrate your credibility and proficiency. For employers, having employees that hold a RSP certification can give a competitive advantage in the market place and increase customer confidence in your team. The RSP certification is literally a third-party endorsement of your team’s knowledge, skills, and training. The certification represents a documented commitment to excellence.

Are there different levels of certification?

The certification program has two levels:

Level 1

Those achieving a Level 1 certification will have demonstrated proficiency in the foundations of road safety principles. The Level 1 examination is designed for a broad audience of professionals who in the performance of their work make decisions or take actions that potentially impact the safety of the traveling public. This includes those in the behavioral, law enforcement, emergency response, public health, motor vehicle, and engineering communities. The Level 1 certification demonstrates expertise in road safety's multidisciplinary dimensions. The Level 1 exam audience includes but is not limited to those involved with program administration and operations; research and education; planning and design; data collection and analysis; emergency response and crash investigation; policy and regulation; etc. The Level 1 exam takes up to three hours to complete; contains 75 multiple-choice questions; and is qualitative. Knowledge domains included in the Level 1 exam are:

- Foundations of Road Safety
- Measuring Safety
- Human Behavior and Road Safety
- Solving Safety Problems
- Implementing Road Safety Programs

Level 2

The Level 2 certification is geared toward professionals whose primary job functions are directed at improving the safety performance of the surface transportation system. The Level 2 is a higher-level certification demonstrating a deeper level of understanding and proficiency in road safety science. It is for professionals responsible for developing and implementing behavioral or engineering programs aimed at reducing the number of fatalities and injuries due to road crashes. Prospective certificants will select between a Level 2 certification with a "behavioral specialty" or a Level 2 certification with an "infrastructure specialty." The Level 2 exam takes up to three hours to complete; contains 75 multiple-choice questions; and is both qualitative and quantitative. The inaugural Level 2 Road Safety Professional exam period is scheduled for October 2019 (applications are due August 6).

What are the qualifications for the Level 1 exam?

Pre-requisites to take the Level 1 exam include:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited university and a minimum of two years of professional experience in transportation, highway safety, or public health; or
- A minimum of four years of professional experience in transportation, highway safety, or public health fields.

What are the differences between the two levels of exams?

	Level 1	Level 2
Description	Demonstrates expertise in road safety's multidisciplinary dimensions	Higher level certification that demonstrates deeper level of understanding and proficiency in road safety science
Audience	For any professional who in the performance of their work makes decisions or takes actions that potentially impact the safety of the traveling public	Any professional whose primary job functions are directed at improving the safety performance of the surface transportation system
Exam Options	One option	Two options: Behavioral Infrastructure
Time Frame	First exam – October 2018	First Exam – October 2019
Qualifications	Combination bachelor's degree and 2–4 years experience in transportation, highway safety, or public health	Successful completion of Level 1 exam Combination bachelor's degree and 5–10 years experience in transportation, highway safety, or public health
Exam Content	3 hours 75 questions Qualitative	3 hours 75 questions Qualitative and quantitative

What are the qualifications for the Level 2 exam?

Pre-requisites for the Level 2 exam include:

- Successful completion of the Level 1 exam (The Level 1 and Level 2 exams can be taken concurrently.);
- A bachelor's degree from an accredited university and a minimum of five years of professional experience in transportation, highway safety, or public health; or
- A minimum of 10 years of professional experience in transportation, highway safety, or public health fields.

When will the Level 2 certification be available?

The RSP Level 2 certification development is now fully underway. The kick-off meeting was held in mid-December at ITE Headquarters in Washington, DC, USA. The RSP Level 2 examination will include two specialties: behavioral and infrastructure. Individuals have the choice of taking either examination, or they may take both examinations (two separate examination fees, but no additional certification fee). Most of the SMEs from the RSP Level 1 development are involved in supporting the RSP Level 2 development. Some additional experts have been added to both the infrastructure and behavioral areas for a total of about 20 SMEs. At

the meeting in December, SMEs took the domains and subdomains of knowledge crafted by the Steering Committee and worked with TPCB's certification consultant Scantron to create a more detailed content outline for the Level 2 examinations.

The next step in the Level 2 development process was a validation survey of practitioners. The practitioners reviewed and rated the knowledge domains and tasks defined by the SMEs according to their importance, criticality, and frequency of performance. Following the survey, SMEs began the process of developing questions for the Level 2 exams. The group met in Washington in June 2019 to work on finalizing test questions.

Who administers the examinations?

The certification exams are administered by Scantron, a recognized certification and licensure testing company, and managed by the TPCB with support from ITE. The examination fee is \$100. The three-year Certification Fee for the RSP Level 1 is \$180. The three-year Certification Fee for the RSP Level 2 will be an additional \$135 for three years. The three-year Certification Fee for the RSP Level 1 and Level 2 (\$315) is the same as the PTOE and PTP. Discounts are provided for holders of multiple certifications. Exams are offered at various sites across the nation. You must apply in advance to take the exam (about two–three months in advance). More information can be found at www.tpcb.org. For information on exam dates, visit <https://www.tpcb.org/exams/schedule>.

Resources

Listed below are suggested resources for the preparation of the Level 1 exam. A refresher series is also available. Resources for the Level 2 exam will be published prior to the availability of the Level 2 exams.

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO): *Highway Safety Manual, 2010*
- USDOT/Federal Highway Administration: Textbook – *Road Safety Fundamentals: Concepts, Strategies and Practices That Reduce Fatalities and Injuries on the Road*. Available for free download at <https://rspcb.safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsf/>
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA): *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasures Guide for State Highway Safety Offices, 2015, 9th Edition*. Also available for free download.
- Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE): *Traffic Engineering Handbook, 7th Edition, 2016*
- Crash Modification Factors Clearinghouse
- AAA: *Improving Traffic Safety in the United States, The Journey Forward, 2007*
- *National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP): Report 501 – Integrated Safety Management Process*
- World Road Association (PIARC): *Road Safety Manual – Selected Chapters*

- *Human Factors In Traffic Safety, 3rd Edition*, Edited by Alison Smiley, Lawyers and Judges Publishing Company Inc., 2015
- *NCHRP Report 600: Human Factors Guidelines for Road Systems*
- *NCHRP Report 500 – Guidance for Implementation of the AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan* (Selected reports)

What do the exams cover?

Below is the content outline for the levels of RSP certification. An exhaustive list with descriptions of each domain is available at www.tpcb.org.

Level 1 Exam

- Domain i: Foundations of Road Safety
- Domain ii: Measuring Safety
- Domain iii: Human Behavior and Road Safety
- Domain iv: Solving Safety Problems
- Domain v: Implementing Road Safety Programs

Level 2 - Behavioral Specialty

- Domain i: Fundamentals
- Domain ii: Road Safety Program Management
- Domain iii: Safety Data and Analysis
- Domain iv: Target Crashes and Countermeasures
- Domain v: Human Health and Transportation Modes
- Domain vi: Public Health and Transportation Safety
- Domain vii: Addressing Safety Problems with Public Policy (Law, Regulation, Policies, and Standards)
- Domain viii: Strategic Safety Planning
- Domain ix: Safe System Approach

Level 2(II) - Infrastructure Specialty

- Domain i: Road Safety Management
- Domain ii: Acquiring and Using Safety Data
- Domain iii: Crash Prediction and Trend Interpretation
- Domain iv: Target Crashes and Countermeasures
- Domain v: Multimodal Transportation Safety
- Domain vi: Addressing Safety Problems with Policy
- Domain vii: Safe Systems

Who are the sponsors of the RSP Certification Program?

Development of the program has been led by Jeffrey Paniati, Executive Director and CEO of ITE. Geni Bahar, P.Eng., RSP1 (M) with Navigats, Inc., in Canada, who has been instrumental in supporting the RSP both as a Steering Committee member and SME, has been appointed to the TPCB for a three-year term. She will ensure that RSP interests are represented in the policies and operations of the TPCB. Development funding has been provided by FHWA and NHTSA. Additional funding for development has been provided

by sponsors. Members of the Founders Circle include: Clemson University, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, ITE, Canada's Community of Transportation Professionals, Kimley Horn, the Roadway Safety Foundation, the Association of Transportation Safety Information Professionals, and Stantec. Safety Investor Sponsors include: Garver, Olsson Associates, and the TPCB. Advocates for Safety include: ARCADIS, PD' Programming, Earl Newman Associates, and Tindale Oliver. Supporting Organizations include: Clemson University's Institute for Global Road Safety and Security, AASHTO, AQTr, GHSA, The Highway Community, HSRC, ITE, Iowa State University, University of Manitoba, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, and Navigats, Inc.

Closing Remarks

The development of the RSP certification is a true advancement for those who work in road safety. I am truly grateful for Jeff Paniati's outstanding leadership and tenacity that turned this program into a reality. It has been my privilege to serve as an SME for the program, and as a member of the Steering Committee. Leanna DePue, Chair of the NAWHSL Board of Advisors, has also been involved as an SME. Rhonda Craft, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety and Governors Highway Safety Association representative also sits on the Steering Committee.

For individuals, the RSP certification provides recognition of career accomplishment and a competitive advantage in career advancement. I hope that you will give serious consideration to taking the Level 1 examination, and subsequently, the Level 2 examination. Examination dates and location information can be found at www.tpcb.org. If you have other questions about the program, contact Ann O'Neill at aoneill@tcpb.org or (202) 464-6213.

Thank you all for your passion for safety and for your desire and commitment to make our nation's roadways safer for all who use them.

(Information for this article was taken from numerous documents produced throughout the development of the RSP Certification Program.) [itej](#)



Terecia Webb Wilson is a professor of practice and assistant director of the Institute for Global Road Safety and Security at Clemson University and a member of the RSP Steering Committee. She is part of a team that worked to establish the nation's first master's degree in the management and administration of road safety programs, the Master's of Transportation Safety Administration. She previously served as the coordinator for South Carolina's State Highway Safety Office and Director of Safety for SCDOT. She is on the Board of Advisors for the National Association of Women Highway Safety Leaders. She co-chaired the TRB Standing Committee on Highway Safety Workforce Development, and chaired/served on numerous NCHRP panels.

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Certification establishes competency for professionals involved in transportation, safety, and health professions who provide for the safety of the traveling public.



Introducing RSP Level 2 This certification is geared toward professionals whose primary job functions are directed at improving the safety performance of the surface transportation system. It is for professionals responsible for developing and implementing engineering or behavioral programs aimed at reducing the number of fatalities and injuries due to road crashes.

Be among the first to earn the RSP2 certification. The inaugural exam is October 2019

For more information and applications, visit www.tpcb.org

THE DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR THE OCTOBER 2019 EXAM PERIOD IS AUGUST 6, 2019