

TARCOG Regional Safety Coalition

Example Strategies & Countermeasures for Unrestrained Passenger Related Crashes

Seat Belt Use Laws

- **Local primary enforcement belt use laws-** In some States with secondary enforcement belt use laws, individual communities have enacted and enforced community-wide primary laws or ordinances. These laws differ from statewide laws only in that they are enacted, publicized, and enforced locally.
- **Increase belt use law penalties-** Penalties for most belt use law violations are low. As of July 2012, a violation resulted in a typical fine of \$25 or less in all but 13 States (IIHS, 2012). Low fines may not convince nonusers to buckle up and may also send a message that belt use laws are not taken seriously.
- **State Primary Enforcement Belt Use Laws/ Increase Penalties-** Primary enforcement belt use laws permit law enforcement officers to stop and cite a seat belt use law violator independent of any other traffic behavior. Secondary enforcement laws allow law enforcement officers to cite violators only after they first have been stopped for some other traffic violation. Countermeasure may be beyond the scope of the regional Coalition.

Seatbelt Law Enforcement

- **Short high-visibility bely law enforcement-** The most common high-visibility belt law enforcement method consists of short (typically lasting for two weeks), intense, highly publicized periods of increased belt law enforcement, frequently using checkpoints (in States where checkpoints are permitted), saturation patrols, or enforcement zones.
- **Combined enforcement, nighttime-** Retaining the short-term, high-intensity enforcement model but including other traffic safety issues such as impaired driving (DWI) and excessive speed, can be effective since the same drivers tend to drink, speed, and not buckle up.
- **Sustained enforcement-** Some jurisdictions, including California, Oregon, and Washington, enforce their belt use laws vigorously as part of customary traffic enforcement activities.

Communications and Outreach

- **Communications supporting enforcement-** All high-visibility enforcement programs include communications and outreach strategies that use some combination of earned media (news stories) and paid advertising. Communications and outreach can be conducted at local, State, regional, or national levels.
- **Strategies for low-belt-use-groups-** Communications and outreach campaigns directed at low-belt-use groups have been demonstrated to be effective for targeted programs that support, and are supported by, enforcement.

Child Restraint/ Booster Seat Law Enforcement

- **Short high-visibility CR law enforcement-** As with high visibility enforcement aimed at adult occupants, enforcement of child restraint/booster laws should be coupled with high visibility communications and outreach.
- **Communication strategies for older children-** There is beginning to be more of an emphasis on developing and implementing programs targeting children ages 8 to 15. NHTSA is developing material and resources for States and programs interested in targeting this age group and some pilot programs have been implemented and evaluated that can be used as resources for program development.
- **School programs-** Schools provide well-defined and somewhat controlled audiences for seat belt use programs. Education and other communications strategies can be tailored to a specific audience.

Sources

1. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices, Eight Edition, 2015*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Transportation. 2015.
2. National Cooperative Highway Research Program. *NCHRP Report 622: Effectiveness of Behavioral Highway Safety Countermeasures*. NCHRP, Washington, D.C. 2008