

Emphasis Area #1. Safety Belt Use

Champion: Bobbi Perkins, Injury Prevention, Department of Public Health and Human Services

Objective: Increase Safety Belt Usage to 90 Percent.

Performance Measures:

- **Annual statewide safety belt utilization for all roads.**
- **Annual restraint use by occupant fatalities.**

Montana has secondary law enforcement for safety belt use, meaning that there must be another reason for stopping a vehicle other than noncompliance with safety belt laws before a violation can be charged. Although Montana ranks relatively high for overall seat belt usage among states with secondary law enforcement (78.9 percent in 2010 for all roads), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) documentation shows that most states with a primary enforcement law have higher compliance rates. Montana has established a variety of programs to encourage safety belt use and proper utilization of child safety restraints. New strategies focus on the technical and informational support in the pursuit of a primary safety belt law and targeted enforcement and education for low belt use populations. The Montana Seat Belt Coalition was established in October 2007. Their sole purpose is to strategize and develop a plan to ensure a primary safety belt law for both adults and children is passed. This coalition is comprised of state and local governments, Federal agencies, health care professionals, law enforcement, motor carriers association, legislators, and other traffic safety advocates from around the State. In 2011, the Montana State Legislature passed a primary passenger restraint law for children ages 6 and younger and 60 pounds or less.

Safety Belts

New Strategies

Increase Safety Belt Usage – New Strategies

CHAMPIONS: Bobbi Perkins (406) 444-4126 bperkins@mt.gov Facilitator: Pam Buckman (406) 444-0809 pbuckman@mt.gov	Sponsoring Agency	Agency Contact	Implementation Approach – Action Steps	Coordination/ Outreach Efforts	Funding Approach/ Needs/Sources	Implementation Oversight	Evaluation/Assessment Procedure
Increase safety belt usage to 90 percent	Implementation Team: Alex Betz-Montana Highway Patrol (MHP), Tracie Nielson-Buckle-Up MT, Suzan Scott Phillips-Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies (HMHB), Fran Penner-Ray-Office of Public Instruction (OPI), Montana Seatbelt Coalition (Steve Yeakel, Chair), and Denice Harris, AAA and any others interested.						
SB-1 Primary Safety Belt Law/ Child Passenger Safety Provide technical and information support on primary safety belt enforcement law.		Implementation Team, Steve Yeakel-lead MDT-SHTSO	1. Promote existing tool kit to assist stakeholders. 2. Offer technical and informational support as needed to sponsoring agency and Seat Belt Coalition.	1. Implementation Team Members	MDT may fund the PI&E and mailings.	Montana Seat Belt Coalition	Track success of building community, business, and law enforcement support and education. Track legislation.
SB-2 Targeted Education/ Enforcement in Low Belt Use Locations/Population Groups Identify and target enforcement and education to low belt use locations/corridors with a high incidence of unbelted fatal and injury crashes and population groups.	MDT, MHP	MDT-SHTSO MDT-Engineering, NHTSA, hospital representatives, and DPHHS	1. Support MHP and Law Enforcement on obtaining and sustaining new officers designated specifically for traffic enforcement. 2. Expand the use of local statistics in educational and informational materials to stimulate increased public interest and awareness. 3. Work to link crash and trauma databases for a more comprehensive view of local statistics in educational and informational materials to stimulate increased public interest and awareness.	1. Continue to work with MHP/ Local Law Enforcement. 2. Coordinate current data with public awareness efforts.	MDT-SHTSO, DPHHS, Implementation Team	MDT-SHTSO	Increase number of officers and funding. Publications with most current and appropriate data.
SB-3 Adopt quantifiable objectives and performance measures for evaluation and review of all occupant protection (OP) projects	MDT, DPHHS	MDT-SHTSO	1. Establish and provide examples of evaluation options, such as pre-, post-evaluations or comparison data demonstrating a change in awareness, knowledge, behaviors. 2. Internal review of performance objectives as well as partner evaluation.	MDT-SHTSO, Implementation Team		Implementation Team	Status of objectives and performance measures.

Increase Safety Belt Usage – New Strategies (continued)

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SB-4 Provide Leadership and expand partnerships at the state, regional, and local level to promote increased seat belt use, including participation of Native Americans and teens.	Participating Agencies of Seat Belt Emphasis Area	Bobbi Perkins-DPHHS	1. Encourage collaboration between Buckle Up Montana coordinators and community and tribal leaders (county commissioners, city council members, mayor, sheriff, etc.), and community groups (schools, teen groups, parent-teacher associations, faith-based organizations, fraternal organizations, local businesses, hospital and emergency department providers) to gain support for safety efforts to increase seat belt use. 2. Enhance toolkit for local presentations on the importance of seat belt use. The toolkit includes presentation materials, speaker notes, and healthcare costs fact sheets associated to restraint use. Additional resources are added as material is developed.	Safety Stakeholders, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies		Emphasis Area Team	