

Occupant Protection

Link to the Transportation Safety Action Plan:

Action #50

Continue public education efforts aimed at increasing proper use of safety belts and child restraint systems.

The Problem

- **Non-use of Restraints:** According to the 2010 Oregon observed use survey, three percent of passenger car drivers, six percent of pickup truck drivers and fourteen percent of sports car drivers did not use restraints. During 2009, Oregon crash reports (FARS) indicate forty-five percent of motor vehicle occupant fatalities were unrestrained and 8% were of unknown restraint use status.
- **Improper Use of Safety Belts:** Some adult occupants inadvertently compromise the effectiveness of their belt systems and put themselves or other occupants at severe risk of unnecessary injury by using safety belts improperly. This is most often accomplished by placing the shoulder belt under the arm or behind the back, securing more than one passenger in a single belt system, using only the automatic shoulder portion of a two-part belt system (where the lap belt portion is manual), or placing a child into a belt system before it fits correctly.
- **Improper Use of Child Restraint Systems:** According to the 2010 Oregon observed use survey, forty percent of children aged five to eight were not riding in booster seats as required by Oregon law. Drivers are confused by the multitude of child restraint models, changing laws and changing “best practice” recommendations. Drivers often place children into adult belt systems too soon. Instead, children must graduate through a series of differently sized restraints until they are grown enough to fit in an adult lap/shoulder belt.
- **Affordability of Child Restraint Systems:** Low income families and caregivers may have difficulty affording the purchase of child safety seats or booster seats, particularly when they need to accommodate multiple children. This contributes to non-use or to reuse of second-hand seats which may be unsafe for various reasons.

NHTSA Observed Use Survey, 2007 – 2010

	02-06 Average	2007	2008	2009	2010	% Change 2007-2010
Front Seat Outboard Use						
Passenger car	91.7%	95.3%	96.3%	96.6%	97.0%	1.8%
Pickup truck	85.7%	92.7%	93.7%	94.3%	95.4%	3.0%

Source: *NHTSA Safety Belt Usage Study Post-Mobilization Findings*, Intercept Research Corporation
This Study employs trained surveyors to examine, from outside the vehicle, use or non-use of a shoulder harness by the driver and right front outboard occupant.

Oregon Observed Use Survey Results, 2007 - 2010

	02-06 Average	2007	2008	2009	2010	% Change 2007-2010
Total Occupant Use	94%	97%	96%	96%	97%	0.0%
Driver Use						
Passenger car	92%	97%	97%	96%	97%	0.0%
Pickup truck	86%	94%	93%	91%	94%	0.0%
Sports car	n/a	88%	89%	85%	86%	-2.3%
Child Restraint Use						
Under one year of age	88%	96%	96%	94%	99%	3.1%
Under four years of age	97%	99%	99%	99%	99%	0.0%
Booster seat use, ages five to eight *	36%	62%	57%	58%	60%	-3.2%
Child Seat Present						
Under one year of age (rear-facing) *	n/a	95%	96%	94%	99%	4.2%
Age one to four years (forward-facing) *	n/a	94%	94%	97%	94%	0.0%
Child Position in Vehicle						
Child seat/booster in rear of vehicle	95%	96%	96%	96%	96%	0.0%
Children 12 and under in rear of vehicle *	n/a	85%	85%	85%	86%	1.2%

Source: *Oregon Occupant Protection Observation Study*, Intercept Research Corporation

This Study employs trained surveyors to examine, from outside the vehicle, safety belt use (lap & shoulder) and three child restraint installation criteria: direction seat faces, whether harness straps are fastened, and whether seat is secured to vehicle.

* Asterisked categories were added to survey beginning in 2006 to better assess Oregon progress relative to USDOT- NHTSA "best practice" recommendations and to gauge compliance with changes to Oregon restraint laws. The criteria for booster seat use was expanded in 2006 to cover five to eight year olds (best practice), instead of four and five year olds (ages covered by Oregon's booster law) as in previous years.

Occupant Use Reported in Crashes, 2007 – 2010

	02-06 Average	2007	2008	2009	2010	% Change 2007-2010
Percent of Fatales Restrained	56.9%	52.2%	56.9%	55.4%	64.9%	24.4%
Total occupant fatalities	364	318	294	269	194	-39.0%
Percent of Nighttime Fatales Unrestrained	n/a	30.9%	34.0%	43.7%	29.7%	-4.0%
Total nighttime occupant fatalities	n/a	47	52	62	27	-42.6%
Percent of Injured Restrained	n/a	92.5%	91.5%	90.8%	90.0%	-2.7%
Total injured occupants	n/a	25,592	24,252	25,513	24,837	-3.0%
Injured < Age 8, in Child Restraint	n/a	65.3%	61.5%	66.0%	63.8%	-2.3%
Total injured occupants under age eight	n/a	836	751	728	892	6.7%

Source: Crash Analysis and Reporting, Oregon Department of Transportation

Includes only those coded as "Belt Used" or "Child Restraint Used." Does not include improper or unknown use.

Belt Enforcement Contacts During Grant Funded Activities, 2007 – 2010

	01-05 Average	2007	2008	2009	2010	% Change 2007-2010
Seat belt citations issued	n/a	20,931	15,679	15,178	12,732	-39.2%

Source: Transportation Safety Division, Oregon Department of Transportation

Goals

- To increase proper safety belt use among passenger vehicle front seat outboard occupants from 97% to 98%, as reported by the NHTSA post-mobilization observed use survey, by 2015.
- To reduce the percentage of unrestrained occupant fatalities from the 2008-2010 average of 41 to 35 percent, as reported by FARS, by 2015.
- To increase proper child restraint use from 64% to 75% among injured child occupants under eight years old, as reported by FARS, by 2015.

Performance Measures

- Increase total proper occupant restraint use, as determined by the statewide Oregon Occupant Protection Observation Study, from 97 percent to 98 percent by December 31, 2012.
- Increase use of booster seats, as determined by the statewide Oregon Occupant Protection Observation Study, from 60 percent to 70 percent by December 31, 2012.
- Decrease the number of nighttime occupant fatalities reported as “unrestrained” from the 2008-2010 calendar base year average of 47 to 44 by December 31, 2012.
- Decrease the number of unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities in all seating positions from the 2008-2010 calendar base year average of 79 to 74 by December 31, 2012.
- Increase statewide observed seat belt use among front seat outboard occupants in passenger vehicles, as determined by the NHTSA compliant survey, one percentage point from the 2008-2010 calendar base year average usage rate of 97 percent to 98 percent by December 31, 2012.

Public Opinion Measures

How often do you use safety belts when you drive or ride in a car, van, sport utility vehicle or pickup - always, almost always, sometimes, seldom or never?

Almost all respondents (98 percent) report that they “always” (95 percent) or “almost always” (3 percent) wear a safety belt when driving. *Source: Statewide Public Opinion Survey, Summary and Technical Report, May 2010.*

In the past 60 days, have you read, seen or heard anything about seat belt law enforcement by police?

Twenty-eight percent (28%) of those surveyed indicate they have read, seen or heard information about seat belt law enforcement by police within the past 60 days. *Source: Statewide Public Opinion Survey, Summary and Technical Report, May 2010.*

Where did you see or hear these messages?

Respondents who are aware of messages regarding seat belt law enforcement by police most often mention television (41 percent), roadway signs (30 percent), newspaper (25 percent) and/or radio (15 percent) as the primary sources. Source: Statewide Public Opinion Survey, Summary and Technical Report, May 2010.

Based on anything you know or may have heard, what do you think the chances are of getting a ticket if you don't wear your safety belt - that is, how many times out of 100 would you be ticketed? The average perceived chance of getting a ticket for not wearing a safety belt is 37 percent. An equal number of respondents believe the chances of getting a ticket for not wearing a safety belt are 20 percent or less (38 percent) or over 20 percent (39 percent). Source: Statewide Public Opinion Survey, Summary and Technical Report, May 2010.

Activity Measure

Number of seat belt citations issued during grant-funded enforcement activities.

During the 2010 federal grant year, there were 12,732 grant funded seat belt citations issued.

Strategies

- Conduct public education activities to explain why vehicle restraints are needed, how to properly use them, and how to meet requirements of Oregon law.
- Target marketing and enforcement campaigns to high-risk and low-use rate populations.
- Improve the effectiveness of educational programs by actively seeking new partners and utilizing new technologies to reach high-risk occupants.
- Provide funding for overtime enforcement of safety belt/child restraint laws.
- Maximize enforcement visibility by encouraging multi-agency campaigns, and coordinating campaigns with the timing of news releases, PSA postings, safety belt/child seat inspections, and nationwide events such as “Click It or Ticket” and National Child Passenger Safety Week.
- Promote correct use of child restraint systems among the general public, parents, child care providers, health professionals, emergency medical personnel, law enforcement officers, and the court system.
- Provide funding for statewide coordination of child passenger safety training, technician certification, recertification, child seat fitting station, and seat distribution programs.
- Maintain statewide pool of Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs) who can routinely provide child safety seat check-ups to meet demand within their local communities.
- Subsidize purchase of child safety seats for no or low-income families as conditions of federal funding allow.
- Support and promote nationally recognized “best practice” recommendations.

- Foster cooperative relationships and resource sharing with Oregon partner agencies and with other states' occupant protection programs.

Project Summaries

Section 402

OP-12-45-02 OSSA Safety Belt Overtime Enforcement \$229,000

Year-round overtime enforcement will be conducted by local sheriff's offices towards increasing compliance with safety belt/child restraint laws with coordination by Oregon State Sheriffs Association. Concurrent enforcement of speed and other traffic laws will be included. Participating agencies will conduct three (3) two-week enforcement blitzes, coordinate with media, and acquire related training as needed.

OP-12-45-04 Safety Belt Overtime Enforcement Training \$31,500

TSD staff will design and deliver safety belt overtime enforcement training. This grant covers costs of training facilities, meals, lodging, speakers, and materials.

**OP-12-45-01 Statewide Services Project
(Gard Communications/Intercept Research/TSD) \$195,500**

This project will fund contracted and in-house design and distribution of public education materials. Three statewide observed use surveys will be conducted. Two of the surveys, required by NHTSA, will observe driver and right front seat occupants. New NHTSA regulations will also require major redesign of the front-seat survey methodology during this year. A third survey will observe occupants in all seating positions.

**OP-12-45-14 Enhancement of Community Level
CPS Programs, ODOT Region 4 \$19,000**

TSD Region 4 staff will coordinate the provision of scholarships for CPS technician and instructor candidates, car seats and booster purchases for families in need, and equipment or supplies to enhance the quality or capacity of child seat fitting stations, child seat distribution sites, and/or alternative sentencing programs within Region 4.

Section 405

**K2-12-46-11 Enhancement of Community Level
CPS Programs, ODOT Region 1 (ACTS Oregon) \$30,000**

This project may provide mentorship to child seat checkup and distribution programs towards independent operation. It may also provide scholarships for CPS technician and instructor candidates, car seats and booster purchases for families in need, and equipment and/or supplies, to enhance the quality or capacity of child seat fitting stations, child seat distribution sites, and/or alternative sentencing programs having a significant CPS component within ODOT Region 1 (Portland Metro area and surrounding areas).

K2-12-46-03 **OSP Safety Belt Overtime Enforcement** **\$85,000**
Year-round overtime enforcement will be conducted by state police field units towards increasing compliance with safety belt/child restraint laws with coordination by OSP Patrol Division. Concurrent enforcement of speed and other traffic laws will be included. Participating agencies will conduct three (3) two-week enforcement blitzes, coordinate with media, and acquire related training as needed.

K2-12-46-08 **OACP Safety Belt Overtime Enforcement** **\$275,000**
Year-round overtime enforcement will be conducted by local police departments towards increasing compliance with safety belt/child restraint laws with coordination by Oregon Association Chiefs of Police. Concurrent enforcement of speed and other traffic laws will be included. Participating agencies will conduct three (3) two-week enforcement blitzes, coordinate with media, and acquire related training as needed.

Section 2011

K3-12-45-05 **ACTS Oregon Child Safety Seat Resource Center** **\$150,000**
The Center will provide the following child restraint educational services statewide including the delivery of nationally standardized child passenger safety training for technicians/instructors; traffic safety newsletter, website and presentations; individualized assistance and referral services via 1-800 telephone line and website.

K3-12-45-12 **Enhancement of Community Level**
CPS Programs, ODOT Regions 2 **\$20,000**
TSD Region staff will coordinate the provision of scholarships for CPS technician and instructor candidates, car seats and booster purchases for families in need, and equipment and/or supplies to enhance the quality or capacity of child seat fitting stations, child seat distribution sites, and/or alternative sentencing programs within their respective Region.

K3-12-45-13 **Enhancement of Community Level**
CPS Programs, ODOT Regions 3 **\$15,000**
TSD Region staff will coordinate the provision of scholarships for CPS technician and instructor candidates, car seats and booster purchases for families in need, and equipment and/or supplies to enhance the quality or capacity of child seat fitting stations, child seat distribution sites, and/or alternative sentencing programs within their respective Region.

K3-12-45-15 **Enhancement of Community Level**
CPS Programs, ODOT Regions 5 **\$20,000**
TSD Region staff will coordinate the provision of scholarships for CPS technician and instructor candidates, car seats and booster purchases for families in need, and equipment and/or supplies to enhance the quality or capacity of child seat fitting stations, child seat distribution sites, and/or alternative sentencing programs within their respective Region.