



OREGON SAFETY BELT OVERTIME CAMPAIGN BLITZ

FACT SHEET & TALKING POINTS February 6 – 19, 2012



- A statewide observation survey in June 2011 found ninety - seven percent of Oregon's motoring public using safety belts, making Oregon one of the three highest belt use states in our country. Since the 1990 passage of Oregon's adult belt law, observed belt use among the motoring public has doubled from 50% to 97% while crash fatality and injury rates have both dramatically decreased by 61% and 37% respectively.
- Consistent vehicle restraint use is the single most effective way to protect motor vehicle occupants from crash injury or death, according to the US Department of Transportation.
- Child safety seats reduce crash fatality risk for infants under 1 year old by 71 percent and for toddlers aged 1 to 4 by 54 percent. Safety belts reduce fatality risk by 45 to 60 percent. And yet, 35% or 194 of Oregon's crash fatalities in 2010 were reportedly unrestrained. ODOT estimates that approximately half of these fatalities could have been avoided with proper restraint use.
- The last of three annual traffic enforcement "blitzes" dedicated to proper safety belt and child restraint use will run February 9 through February 19.
- Oregon sheriff offices, local police departments and OSP will participate on federal overtime grants from US Department of Transportation.
- Speeding and driver impairment are the most common causes of injury crashes. Oregon's safety belt overtime enforcement program is committed to reducing crashes and crash injuries by promoting safety belt use and discouraging speeding and impaired drivers.
- **OREGON LAW:** A child weighing less than 40 pounds must be properly restrained in a child safety seat. A child under one year of age or weighing less than twenty pounds must be restrained in a rear-facing child seat. A child over forty pounds but under age eight or less than 4' 9" tall must be restrained in either a child seat with harness system or in a booster seat that raises the child up so that a lap and shoulder belt system fit correctly.

- *For help with child seats, refer to the seat manufacturer's instructions, vehicle owner's manual or call ACTS Oregon Child Safety Seat Resource Center at (503)643-5620 in the Portland area or (877)793-2608 toll free.*
- "BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS of the American Academy of Pediatrics and USDOT: Children should ride in rear-facing car seats to age two or to the upper weight limit of the seat in use. Children should continue to ride in safety seats to forty pounds or the maximum upper weight limit of their forward facing seat before transitioning to a booster seat. Children under age thirteen should ride in the back seat. National statistics suggest rear seating reduces injury risk by 37% among that age group.
- Oregon law requires "proper use" of restraints, meaning use of the entire belt system or child restraint as intended by the manufacturer.
- For safety belt systems, "proper use" means lap belt placed low across hips and shoulder belt crossing center of the chest over the collarbone. Belts should be free of slack and lying flat with no twists or knots. If the shoulder belt portion of the belt rides up onto the neck or feels uncomfortable, comfort may be increased by using the built-in adjuster or by moving seat position. The shoulder belt should NOT be placed under the arm or behind the back – this can cause serious internal injuries or ejection in a crash.
- The greatest danger to unbelted children and adult occupants is ejection from the vehicle. **Unbelted or improperly restrained occupants are five times more likely to be ejected than one who is belted.** They can also slam into other passengers and injure them during a crash or sharp swerve. **Odds of surviving ejection are estimated at one in four. (Compare this to a one in two hundred fatality rate for occupants who remain inside the vehicle.)** Ejection is the principal reason that minors are prohibited from riding in an open bed of a pickup truck.