

Ohio's Safety Plan

2009 Update

Emphasis Area 3 High-Risk Behaviors: Seat Belts



In 2008, 422 people died and 1,810 people were seriously injured in crashes where drivers or passengers were not properly restrained. These crashes represented 35 percent of all fatalities and 18 percent of all serious injuries in that year.

Over the past several years, Ohio has made significant gains in seat belt use. In 2009, about 84 percent of Ohioans were “buckling up.” The statewide goal is to increase seat belt use to 85 percent in 2010.

Women have the highest rate of seat belt use. Men and young drivers/passengers between the ages of 15 and 25 are less likely to use a seat belt. Seat belt use is also low among pickup truck drivers, and drivers and passengers in south-east Ohio. Northwest Ohio had the highest regional rate of seatbelt use.

Seat belt use can significantly increase your chances of surviving a crash. Seat belts have proven to reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat car passengers by 45 percent – and by 60 percent in pickup trucks, SUVs and mini-vans. Yet nearly one in five Americans (19 percent nationally) fail to regularly wear their seat belts when driving or riding in a motor vehicle, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



Driving Tips:

- **Make sure all occupants of your vehicle are properly buckled up before moving your vehicle.** Every hour someone dies in America simply because they didn't buckle up
- **Always wear your seat belt – even on short trips.** Most motor vehicle crashes happen within 2.5 miles of home.
- **Seat belts are 99% effective in preventing occupants from being ejected in a crash.**
- **Citations will be issued to motorists for failure to wear a seat belt.** It is the law in Ohio. So Click It or Ticket!

State and local governments are also using various strategies to increase seat belt use.

Those strategies include:

Support efforts to enact primary seat belt legislation through state law or local ordinances.

Primary seat belt legislation was included in the original March 2009 state transportation funding bill, but the provision was eliminated from the final bill.

Upgrade child restraint law to include booster seats.

The law went into effect April 9, 2009

Encourage law enforcement to aggressively enforce seat belt and child restraint laws

The Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) will continue to support the national “Click It or Ticket” seat belt campaign. This campaign combines paid advertising and earned media with grants to local law enforcement agencies to conduct high-visibility enforcement of the laws.

In 2010, ODPS will use the “Click It or Ticket” and the “What’s Holding You Back” campaign message for its sustained campaign throughout the year.

Continue to educate the general public and diverse populations about the importance of seat belts.

ODPS directs funding to programs that educate diverse populations about the importance of seat belt use. These programs target areas where seat belt use is the lowest, including rural areas, pickup drivers, male drivers, young drivers and Hispanic and African American communities.

In 2010, ODPS will fund 32 countywide Safe Communities programs, which will involve more than 250 separate communities that play an active role in addressing these issues. This network uses local coalitions to deliver traffic safety messages and programs throughout the year at the local level.

The Ohio Department of Transportation supports these educational programs by posting messages on stationary and freeway message signs and by providing crash statistics and fact sheets.

