



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**



DOT HS 813 442

June 2023

Increasing Seat Belt Use Amongst Rural Populations

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Suggested APA Format Citation:

Solomon, M. G., Elliott, K. R., Tison, J., & Shirley, D. (2023, June). *Increasing seat belt use amongst rural populations* (Report No. DOT HS 813 442). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Technical Report Documentation Page

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|---|--|--|------------------|
| 1. Report No. DOT HS 813 442 | 2. Government Accession No. | 3. Recipient's Catalog No. | |
| 4. Title and Subtitle Increasing Seat Belt Use Amongst Rural Populations | | 5. Report Date May 2023 | |
| | | 6. Performing Organization Code | |
| 7. Authors Mark G. Solomon, Kim R. Elliott, Julie Tison, and David Shirley | | 8. Performing Organization Report No. | |
| 9. Performing Organization Name and Address Preusser Research Group, Inc. 115 Technology Dr., Unit B307 Trumbull, CT 06611 | | 10. Work Unit No. (TRAIS) | |
| | | 11. Contract or Grant No. DTNH2216D00019/ DTNH2217F00176 | |
| 12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE Washington, DC 20590 | | 13. Type of Report and Period Covered Final Report | |
| | | 14. Sponsoring Agency Code | |
| 15. Supplementary Notes The contracting officer's representative for this project was Janice Hartwill-Miller. | | | |
| 16. Abstract This 12-month demonstration project focused on increasing seat belt use in rural areas was conducted in two locations: Bingham County, Idaho and Rapides Parish, Louisiana. The project relied on a multifaceted approach consisting of sustained publicity and police enforcement. A technical assistance guide was used to motivate and assist law enforcement agencies/officers to engage with rural community members on the usefulness of wearing seat belts. The program effort consisted of 1) contact with seat belt violators and 2) sustained messaging to keep the local population informed that seat belt use is important for the health and well-being of the community. Set to begin in Spring 2020, outreach and enforcement efforts were immediately hindered due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The pandemic resulted in staffing shortages and reduced opportunity for face-to-face interactions and community partnerships. Severe storms and flooding (in Louisiana) created additional hurdles. Still, participating agencies conducted (non-scientific) seat belt observations and collected citation and outreach data. Program data showed that law enforcement officers approached non-compliant motorists and law enforcement agencies participated in seat belt messaging, at least monthly. Pre- and post- waves of (scientific) roadside seat belt observations in program and control areas assessed the program's impact on seat belt use. Results were mixed, in terms of belt use, with only Rapides Parish showing some encouraging results. During debriefing, local agency representatives were confident that the program would be successful if carried out in more normal circumstances. | | | |
| 17. Key Words seat belt use, rural, outreach, enforcement | | 18. Distribution Statement This document is available to the public from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, National Center for Statistics and Analysis, crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov | |
| 19. Security Classif.(of this report) Unclassified | 20. Security Classif.(of this page) Unclassified | 21. No. of Pages 175 | 22. Price |

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|--|
| AAA | American Automobile Association |
| APD | Alexandria Police Department |
| BCSO | Bingham County Sheriff's Office |
| CDC | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention |
| CenLA | Central Louisiana |
| <i>CIOT</i> | <i>Click It or Ticket</i> |
| DDACTS | Data-Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety |
| FARS | Fatality Analysis Reporting System |
| GHTSA | Governors Highway Safety Association |
| HLDI | Highway Loss Data Institute |
| HVE | high-visibility enforcement |
| IACP | International Association of Chiefs of Police |
| IIHS | Insurance Institute for Highway Safety |
| LEA | law enforcement agency |
| LHSC | Louisiana Highway Safety Commission |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NOYS | National Organization for Youth Safety |
| NRSF | National Road Safety Foundation |
| NSC | National Safety Council |
| OMB | Office of Management and Budget |
| PIO | public information officer |
| PRG | Preusser Research Group |
| RP method | reference point method |
| SAS | Statistical Analysis System |
| SBO | seat belt observation |
| SHSO | State Highway Safety Office |
| SMO | Social Media Officer |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for Social Sciences |
| TAG | technical assistance guide |
| TSC | transportation safety coordinator |

Executive Summary

This 12-month demonstration project focused on increasing seat belt use in rural areas was conducted in two locations, Bingham County, Idaho, and Rapides Parish, Louisiana. The project attempted to invigorate local enforcement agencies to recognize the consequences of low seat belt usage in rural locations and motivate them to act.

Project efforts included use of several types of data to inform law enforcement agencies and to assist their efforts to observe seat belt use, enforce against seat belt violations, and publicize enforcement efforts. Those data included findings from focus groups, fatality crash data, observational seat belt usage data and health and safety information/data including costs associated with crashes and injuries.

Preusser Research Group provided support by developing a technical assistance guide for this project and making in-person visits to review all elements in the guide. The TAG was created to provide resources and guidance for LEAs as they conduct seat belt observations and publicity efforts. Key elements of the guide included on-site observational survey training and how-to material for publicizing enforcement efforts. PRG followed up with monthly and often weekly communications with points-of-contact in the participating LEAs to offer support with sustained publicity and enforcement efforts.

Set to begin in Spring 2020, both demonstration locations experienced hurdles. Several named storms and the COVID-19 pandemic made implementation difficult. Even so, the participating LEAs made efforts to sustain focus on improving seat belt usage among rural residents.

As a result of the project hurdles, the agencies were unable to conduct consistent seat belt observations using the same observers at the same times, weekdays, roadway locations, lanes, or traffic flow directions. Nevertheless, the agencies conducted non-scientific seat belt observations and collected citation and publicity/outreach data to provide descriptive data and document program progress. These data helped evaluators track the levels of effort that agencies put into their programs.

To complement the agency data, evaluators conducted scientific seat belt observations at pre-, mid-, and post-waves. Evaluators maintained the validity of these observations by standardizing wherever possible the observers, times, weekdays, roadway locations, lanes, and traffic flow directions. These observations were conducted in the two program sites and two control sites, Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, and Bonner County, Idaho. The control sites were chosen because they have the same State laws and similar demographics as the test sites, but they are relatively distant from the test sites. The program evaluation answers the following questions:

Did focus group findings influence the demonstration program approach? Rural community members provided insight into preferred messaging content and distribution. The participating LEAs were willing to use what was learned from the rural residents; specifically, the focus group participants indicated that they wanted more community outreach and face-to-face communication with the police. However, COVID-19 and related staffing shortages made it nearly impossible to sustain that recommendation.

Did focus group findings do anything to motivate law enforcement officers or influence their approach to non-use? In Rapides Parish, the Alexandria Police Department provided little evidence suggesting focus group findings influenced APD's approach to enforcement. Grant funding, first and foremost, appeared to motivate the agency to focus on seat belt violations.

APD officers were already accustomed to focusing on seat belt violators and regularly worked grant funded seat belt enforcement projects. APD's leadership appeared receptive to the focus group suggestion for more outreach and developing community partnerships, but again COVID-19 complicated sustaining outreach. In Bingham County, the focus group findings also appeared to influence Bingham County Sheriff's Office leadership, who wanted to reach out more into their rural community, however, as in Rapides Parish, COVID-19 curtailed sustained efforts.

Did the participating law enforcement agencies use the TAG? Post-program interviews indicated the TAGs were read and found informative at the start of the efforts but rarely used after an initial reading.

Did law enforcement agencies/officers show any more, less, or the same motivation toward non-usage over time? Participating LEAs provided citation data that indicated agencies and officers in both locations were willing to focus *more* attention on citing non-compliance with the seat belt law, most program months. The evaluation was less helpful for determining whether officers in the field were motivated by overtime pay (alone) or other factors.

LEAs experienced barriers to sustaining messaging and outreach in both demonstration locations. This was particularly the case with community outreach. In Rapides Parish, COVID-19 and hurricanes were immediately problematic. The pandemic and the extreme weather not only provided fewer avenues for program outreach, but also reduced the availability of officers to interact with the community. Bingham County efforts were also affected by COVID-19. Efforts put forth in Bingham County indicated that smaller agencies serving "thinly populated" rural areas are not likely staffed with the expertise to effectively sustain a messaging campaign. This was true even when equipped by a TAG and availability of routine support efforts. Future program efforts must consider the capability of enforcement agencies to staff, prioritize, and sustain publicity.

Did the observational surveys conducted by law enforcement officers motivate them to do more? The participating LEAs often collected observational data in a less-than-ideal manner leading to less useful data and results. This can create confusion when communicating results. PRG provided in-person training and written instructions at the start of the program in hope of achieving tighter control over the quality of data collection. Turnover in staffing, however, contributed to irregular data collection and results. That said, program publicity still used the observational survey results to point out that low belt use remained a problem in the area.

The APD program contact person suggested that the observations worked well to motivate traffic patrol officers, as it reminded them that the problem was still not fixed. The project's main point-of-contact in Bingham County, though, believed the surveys did not work well to motivate officers because officers routinely see (with or without a survey) the same people over and over still not wearing belts. This contact believed that these non-users were unmotivated to change because of the low fine amount (\$10). LEAs wanting to use observational surveys should conduct them with consistency in mind to maximize use (e.g., tracking, publicity) over time. Other factors (e.g., low fine amount, resistant population) may play a role that diminishes observational survey influence on officer motivation.

Did seat belt usage improve over time? PRG conducted pre-, mid-, and post-waves of scientific roadside seat belt observations. These were conducted in program areas and control areas to assess the impact of the program on seat belt use. Results from the surveys were mixed. Results provided no indication that the program affected seat belt use in Bingham County. Rapides

Parish showed some encouraging results. Analyses indicated significant interactions in belt usage between program and control locations (i.e., seat belt use rose more in the program area relative to the change in the control area). These results were strongest among women drivers, drivers in the 35-to-59 age group, and drivers on non-city roads. The gains in seat belt use in Rapides Parish were sometimes small, but often paired with a decrease in Ouachita Parish, the control site. Thus, the fact that belt use increased/stayed stable in the program location while decreasing in the control location is encouraging.

Agency opinion on replication. Local agency representatives expressed confidence in post-program interviews; they believed the program could be successful if carried out in more normal circumstances and that it should, in their opinion, be replicated.

Introduction

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration contracted with PRG for a project consisting of sustained publicity, outreach, and police enforcement. This project included providing support and information to local LEAs to increase seat belt usage leading to a reduction in the number of crash fatalities and injuries involving unbelted occupants. A particular feature of this project was that it focused exclusively on rural areas with low seat belt use rates and relatively high rates of unrestrained fatalities.

The project began with the selection of two locations where law enforcement interacts daily with a local rural population. In each location, PRG asked a local LEA to participate in a 12-month-long program effort. PRG agreed to provide support and information to facilitate a comprehensive approach combining publicity and enforcement.

Project efforts included the use of several types of data to inform LEAs and to assist their implementation efforts. Those data included findings from focus groups, fatality crash data, observational seat belt usage data, and health and safety information/data and costs associated with crash related injuries.

PRG provided support and information. That support began with the development of a TAG created to provide resources and guidance for LEAs as they conducted seat belt observations and publicity efforts. Key elements of the guide included on-site observational survey training and how-to material for publicizing efforts. PRG made in-person visits to review all elements included in the guide before program kickoff. PRG then followed up with monthly and often weekly communications with points-of-contact in the participating LEAs to help them sustain efforts to message the program.

A primary project objective was to assess whether messaging that uses seat belt use rates, combined with the reality of health care costs, lost wages, and overall financial impact of an unbelted crash would resonate within a rural community, and ultimately increase seat belt use. Another project objective was to see if using a “locally guided” approach would motivate law enforcement to sustain engagement with the community on matters of seat belt safety and compliance. To that end, NHTSA directed PRG to conduct focus groups with local rural residents and to include their thoughts and insights in the development and delivery of program messaging.

The project was set to begin in spring 2020 but was immediately hampered by the COVID-19 outbreak, resulting in staffing shortages and reduced face-to-face interactions between police and the community. The start of programs was delayed until fall 2020. The participating LEAs carried out requested program elements, to some extent, and results were gathered. PRG answered the following research questions.

- *Did focus group findings influence the demonstration program messaging approach or influence enforcement officers in their approach to non-use of seat belts?*
- *Did the participating LEAs use the TAG, summary reports, and examples of publicity provided by PRG?*
- *Did LEAs and officers show any more, less, or the same motivation toward non-usage over time?*

- *Did the observations that law enforcement officers conducted motivate the agency to do more?*
- *Did seat belt usage improve over time?*

Program Development

Site Selection

The project included the selection of two demonstration sites and two control sites. The selection process began with compiling a list of States with belted fatalities under 50% for 2016 based on Fatality Analysis Reporting System data (Figure 1). Researchers used 2016 data because the agreement began in 2017, so the 2016 data was the most current FARS data available at the time of the contract award. The list of States for selection was then narrowed down to States not currently involved in other NHTSA demonstration programs. Site selection considered selecting from two distinct regions of the country: for example, *deep south*, *mid-south*, *mid-Atlantic*, *mid-west*, or *great plains*. PRG also gave preference to program sites that could provide an in-State control site with similar demographics and similar usage rate to the program site. The list of candidate States/sites was given to NHTSA Regional Offices and their input was incorporated into the selection of two locations.

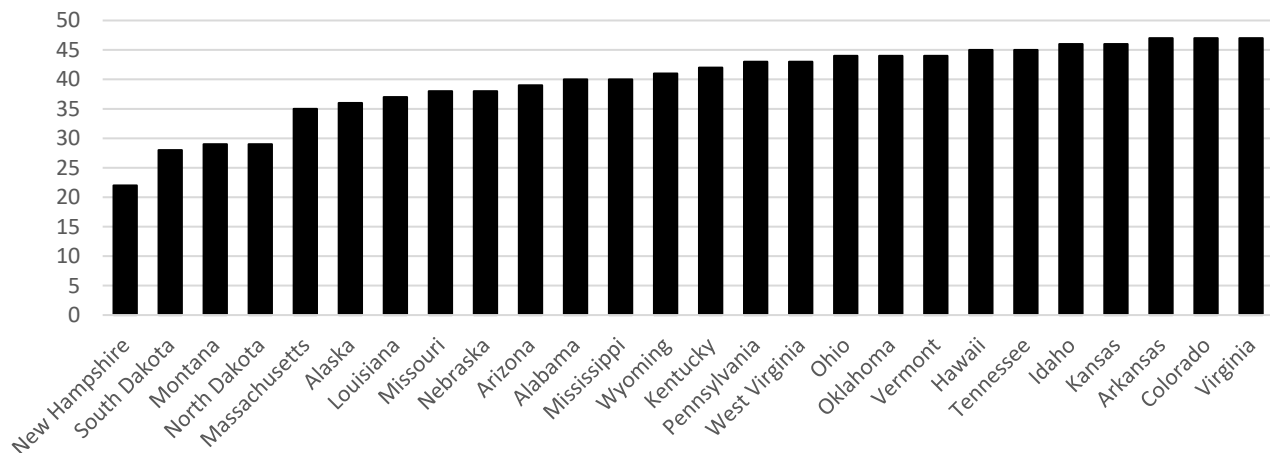


Figure 1. Percentage of Passenger Vehicle Fatalities Who Were Belted (2016)

The two locations selected for the NHTSA demonstration project were Bingham County, Idaho and Rapides Parish, Louisiana. These locations differed in geographical area (Idaho versus Louisiana), agency type (sheriff's office versus police department), jurisdiction (county versus city), and seat belt law type (secondary versus primary offense), which broadened the types of LEAs who might identify with the demonstration effort. Idaho has a relatively weak seat belt law allowing for secondary enforcement for non-compliance and carrying a low fine (\$10). Louisiana has a primary enforcement seat belt law with a \$50 dollar fine for the first offense and a \$75 dollar fine for subsequent offenses. Table 1 summarizes notable characteristics/differences between the two program locations.

One LEA from each location participated: the BCSO and the APD in Rapides Parish. The BCSO is in the small town of Blackfoot, the county seat, and its jurisdiction encompasses the entire county. The APD is located in the 10th largest city in the State and its jurisdiction is the city of Alexandria. Alexandria is a bigger city compared to Blackfoot, but it is surrounded by a large

swath of rural area. According to the program leader at the APD, the city’s population “almost triples during the day from people coming to town” from Rapides and surrounding parishes.

Table 1. Program Site Characteristics

| | Alexandria, Louisiana | Bingham County, Idaho |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Agency Type | Municipal Police | Sheriff’s Office |
| Adult Seat Belt Law Type | Primary/\$50 fine | Secondary/\$10 Fine |
| LEA Jurisdiction | Within City Limits | Entire County |
| Population (County/City)* | 131,613/47,723 | 45,607/12,034 |
| Race Categories | | |
| White | 63% | 89% |
| Black | 32% | <1% |
| Native American | <1% | 7% |
| Identifies Hispanic | 4% | 18% |
| Age Categories | | |
| Under 5 | 7% | 8% |
| <18 | 25% | 31% |
| 18 and over | 75% | 68% |
| 65+ | 16% | 14% |
| Median Household Income | | |
| Families | \$59,244 | \$67,562 |
| Married Couple | \$84,292 | \$76,656 |
| Non-Family | \$26,424 | \$26,745 |

*U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts, July 2021

Two control sites were also selected for the project: Bonner County, and Ouachita Parish . The control sites were chosen because they have the same State laws and similar demographics as the test sites, but they are relatively distant from the test sites. This prevents program efforts from significantly influencing the control sites.

Focus Groups

PRG recruited rural residents from the program county/parish to participate in focus groups.¹ Results from the focus group helped to inform participating LEAs on what the local rural populace had to say about seat belt usage and how best to communicate the need for improvement.

PRG developed and pre-tested a Focus Group Interviewer Guide prior to field use (see Appendix A1). General topics included community characteristics, seat belt attitudes, influences and behaviors, seat belt messaging and message channels. After piloting and finalizing the interviewer’s guide, focus group recruitment took place on location. PRG recruited the rural residents from local storefronts (i.e., grocery, convenience, and hardware). Participants were offered \$25 gift cards for their time.

¹OMB Control Number 2127-0682

The focus groups had 41 participants across six sessions. PRG held three sessions in Rapides Parish in November 21 to 23, 2019. PRG held three more sessions in Bingham County in August 20 to 22, 2020.

Findings from the focus groups for Bingham County and Rapides Parish are summarized below. See Appendix A2 for complete results for the Bingham County focus groups and Appendix A3 for complete results for the Rapides Parish.

Bingham County, Idaho, Focus Group Findings

Community Characteristics

- Participants explained that agriculture is the primary influence on the community's social identity and collective values as well as a primary source of employment for a large portion of the community.
- They also explained that the community has a stable economy generated by hardworking people who are generally satisfied with their work.
- Participants said church and family-oriented recreational activities and entertainment are popular.
- Local law enforcement and other emergency and essential service providers are respected and supported, according to participants.

Attitudes, Influences, and Behavior

- All participants said they wore seat belts on a regular basis and perceived a high level of seat belt use in the community.
- Most stated safety as the primary motivation for seat belt compliance.
- Hearing "horror stories" about people dying or sustaining injuries due to non-compliance, hearing stories about how seat belts saved someone's life, and family members requesting use of seat belts were identified as biggest influencers on seat belt use.
- Other influences mentioned included auto seat belt alerts, ticketing, and the seat belt law.
- Most participants said drivers should require or encourage other passengers to use seat belts.
- Several participants either worked or had worked in the past for companies with seat belt policies and thought the policies were effective, particularly among younger coworkers.
- Several participants in each group described people who do not wear seat belts as selfish, stubborn, irresponsible, and/or unteachable.

Seat Belt Messaging

- All participants reported at least some level of awareness of past public service announcements and other public messages and/or imagery about seat belt usage and legislation, including *Click It or Ticket*, *Seat Belts Save Lives*, *Crash Test Dummies*, and *Buckle Up for Safety*.
- Participants explained that the most persuasive motivator was personal concern for their family members and other loved ones, both the direct risk of non-seat belt use to the lives and well-being of family members and the indirect harm to one's family that would result from one's own serious injury or death.

- Participants received messages related to seat belt use and were asked to rank order the ones most persuasive. There were high levels of interest in messages about personal financial costs and lost workdays due to an unrestrained crash. Bingham County participants were less motivated by fear of getting tickets and the costs of unrestrained crashes to the community.
- Participants thought that messages involving statistics regarding lost workdays or financial costs are far too complex to be used in many conventional media platforms (e.g., billboards, digital signs, radio ads). Participants cautioned that, without clarity and information about the sources for data that are presented in messaging, many readers/listeners would be skeptical about and resistant to the messages.
- Law enforcement officers and other emergency service providers, church leaders, and crash survivors who survived crashes because they were wearing seat belts, or people who had lost loved ones due to unbuckled crashes were identified as effective spokespeople for delivering seat belt messages. Participants did not think celebrities would be best to deliver messages about seat belts to the community.

Trusted Authorities/Spokespeople

- Participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with and respect for the local police force. They were repeatedly described as *friendly*, *respectful*, and *concerned* about and devoted to the safety and well-being of local residents. Police officers, along with other emergency service providers, were also described as having extensive knowledge and direct experience of the negative impact of seat belt nonuse. For most participants, this combination of knowledge and respect make local law enforcement officers (along with their counterparts on emergency medical teams and in the health care community) the ideal spokespeople for presenting messages and sharing information about seat belt use on a community-wide basis. However, these results must be considered with caution since participants indicated that they already wear seat belts regularly, so they may not hold the same views as nonusers.
- Participants pointed out that church attendance and other church-sponsored activities play an extremely important role in the lives of local residents, and local church leaders were repeatedly identified by participants as among the most trusted leaders in the community. Several participants suggested that local church leaders be recruited to provide members of their congregations with information about the benefits of seat belt use. While seat belt use would probably not qualify as an appropriate topic for the Sunday sermon, it could easily be included in regular communications to church members (emails, pastoral letters, bulletin inserts, etc.), on church bulletin boards, or on outdoor signs and announcements.
- Participants recommended that messages about the potential benefits of seat belt compliance or hazards of non-compliance should be delivered by crash survivors or other people (parents, children, loved ones) whose lives were affected by seat belt use.
- Participants expressed little if any interest in having seat-belt related messages presented by local, regional, or national celebrities. Additionally, athletes (professional or college), some of whom have homes in the area (e.g., former San Francisco 49ers standout Jason Hill) were not seen as people who would make good sources of information even though local and college sports are extremely popular in the community.

Seat Belt Message Channels

- Using a variety of media platforms was thought to be the best way to disseminate messages including traditional media and social media. Using local media and conducting in-person presentations facilitated by police or other EMS personnel in local churches, schools, and community organizations were thought to be effective approaches.

Rapides Parish/Alexandria, Louisiana, Focus Group Findings

Community Characteristics

- Focus group participants described the area as “in economic decline.”
- Participants used words to explain community members as “proud” and “tight-knit.”
- They explained a history marked by a strained relationship with law enforcement but said they saw signs of improvement in the relationship between law enforcement and the local community.

Attitudes, Influences, and Behavior

- Focus group participants perceived high seat belt use in their community.
- They suggested the following factors as a motivator/influence on seat belt use.
 - Fear of receiving a citation. Participants said they don’t want to break the law and fear inability to pay the fines.
 - Participants believed the presence of automatic seat belt alerts in vehicles works to improve seat belt use.
 - Local traffic was said to be unsafe and unpredictable, and necessitates wearing seat belts.
 - Many participants viewed their seat belt use as a habitual behavior and believed that more routine usage comes with aging and maturity.
- The effectiveness of seat belts in preventing death or serious injury were not mentioned as motivating or influencing factors of seat belt use.
- Some participants said they know someone whose life was saved because the person was not using a seat belt; some said they knew someone whose life was saved by wearing a seat belt.
- Participants were drawn to the subject of “What would happen to my child/loved one if I died in a car crash?”
- Obstacles to seat belt compliance included the following.
 - Knowing or hearing of people who died because they were wearing seat belts.
 - Experiencing some discomfort when using seat belts.
 - Concerns about personal freedom and being told what to do.
- Most participants reported that they either require or encourage other passengers to use their seat belts. Other participants insisted that it should not be their responsibility, as drivers, to enforce seat belt use by others.
- Most participants agreed that children’s safety is a persuasive motivator for using seat belts and safety equipment, regardless of the cost or inconvenience of doing so.
- When asked about costs of crashes and injuries and persuasiveness, no participant expressed any level of awareness of, or interest in the cost of non-seat belt compliance to the broader community.

- The highest level of response was for the message describing the increased insurance premiums and taxes required to cover the medical costs of people who were injured while not wearing seat belts. (Several participants wanted to know how money from seat belt fines is used.)
- Participants from all groups expressed disbelief with the efficacy of messaging focused on a greater amount of time that an officer must spend working a more severe crash than a less severe crash.
- Participants showed concern about the potential loss of their own workdays – and not about the loss of productivity for local businesses or community. Only 5 participants (27%) reported working or having worked in the past for companies or businesses that require seat belt compliance by employees using company vehicles or driving during work hours. While each of these participants supported and affirmed the effectiveness of these policies for seat belt compliance on a staff-wide level, they also insisted that they were already habitual seat belt users before they were introduced to the policies.

Seat Belt Messaging

- Virtually all participants reported at least some level of awareness of seat belt messaging – particularly *Click It or Ticket* messages. While most participants acknowledged that their ongoing exposure to *CIOT* messages reinforced their awareness of compliance, they insisted that their decision to use seat belts and their habitual compliance with seat belt regulations were already in place before exposure to more recent public messages about seat belts.
- The Rapides Parish focus group participants believed the top three most persuasive message types were: 1) impact of your injury or death on your family/friends; 2) fear of being ticketed; and 3) personal financial costs.

Trusted Authorities/Spokespeople

- Participants pointed to State and local sports heroes/entertainers as potential spokespeople, including New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees, Louisiana State University football coach Ed Orgeron, and sports standouts at LSU-Alexandria (which recently became a 4-year university). A few participants suggested using entertainers from Louisiana (e.g., popular rap singer Lil Wayne, who grew up in New Orleans) as spokespeople for seat belt messages targeting younger drivers.
- Focus group participants suggested personal testimonies of people whose lives were saved by seat belt use, which would be useful if the people presenting the personal messages were chosen based on their ability to represent the specific demographic groups (age, race, household income, etc.) toward which the message is targeted.
- Another suggestion was to use personal testimonies of people who lost loved ones in unrestrained crashes. Spokespeople in this group should be people with firsthand experience of the situations they are describing, and spokespeople should be selected based on their ability to represent the specific demographic groups toward whom the messages are targeted.
- Another suggestion was to use informal community leaders and neighborhood elders to spread seat belt messages.

- Jeffrey W. Hall, the recently elected mayor of Alexandria, who is the community's first African American mayor, was described favorably by both white and African American participants and identified by a few participants as a trustworthy spokesperson for delivering information about the details and rationale for current seat belt regulations.
- Participants repeatedly emphasized their dissatisfaction with and mistrust of local law enforcement and State highway enforcement personnel. In this context, participants demonstrated a strong aversion to the suggestions of public service announcements, billboard messages, etc., that feature local law enforcement officers. However, a few participants did suggest that information about the rationale for and potential benefits of current seat belt regulations might be productively integrated into the recently initiated meetings between informal community groups and representatives of local law enforcement, particularly if such meetings included opportunities for residents to voice their concerns about current laws and how they are enforced.

Seat Belt Message Channels

- Participants suggested program planners use a multiplatform information campaign, in which messages provided via television, radio, roadside billboards and digital message screens, social media, and print advertisements complement and reinforce one another. Participants also felt that the use of social media is important for reaching younger drivers, many of whom have limited exposure to more traditional media (television, radio, print).
- Participants suggested that informal, face-to-face interactions between residents and local law enforcement would be useful, for example at the Citizens' Academies (sponsored by the local sheriff's office and police department) and informal neighborhood meetings where residents meet and express their concerns to local law enforcement officers.

Role of Law Enforcement and Memorandum of Understanding

APD and BCSO agreed to conduct 12-month-long sustained efforts focused on seat belt compliance. The efforts were to include contacting seat belt violators and sustained messaging to keep the local population informed that seat belt use is important for the health and well-being of the community. PRG and the participating agencies established a Memorandum of Understanding. In that MOU, the following was agreed to.

Participating agencies would:

- Commit to a 12-month focus on non-compliance with the seat belt law;
- Sustain information and outreach to the local populace on the importance of seat belt use;
- Conduct monthly observations of seat belt use to monitor change in usage; and
- Report on activities, including citation data and information on publicity/outreach activities.

Preusser Research Group would:

- Provide routine support with program messaging;
- Collaborate with participating agencies to establish innovative concepts using observational survey results as well as cost implications for not wearing seat belts;
- Provide program evaluation support; and

- Supply up to \$30,000 to each participating agency for overtime officer hours and materials used for program purposes.

Role of Publicity

The demonstration program messaging focuses on health and health-related cost data. Data from observational surveys and crash statistics also were included. The program's publicity relied primarily on social media, earned media, and community outreach (i.e., no paid media). Publicity often included observational survey results to remind the local populace about the problem of low belt use and to motivate traffic patrol officers to act.

Support Provided to Law Enforcement

Technical Assistance Guide

Each participating LEA received a TAG how-to manual for planning, implementing, and evaluating local seat belt programs focused on (local) rural travelers. The TAG included step-by-step instructions for officers to conduct observational seat belt surveys, included information on finding local crash- and health-related data for publicity, tips for publicizing seat belt enforcement, and information on tracking progress for evaluating the program. One of the TAG's purposes was to identify relevant sources of local data for the agency to include in their program's sustained publicity. The TAG also listed ideas and suggestions for finding and working with potential community partners. (See Appendix B for the TAG.) The TAG was largely the same between the two program sites, but some customizing was done per location in the TAG's Appendix E, where sources of local data and ideas for community outreach and partnership were listed.

PRG travelled to APD and BCSO to review the respective TAGs in advance of each program's kickoff event. PRG used the meeting to review the timeline for preparing and implementing the program (see Appendix B and refer to TAG page 18). During these visits, PRG provided hands-on training for officers to conduct observational seat belt surveys to help ensure continuity in measurements in the event of staffing changes during the year-long implementation period. PRG asked officers conducting the surveys to use data collection forms provided by PRG (included in the TAG) and to send completed forms to PRG's office, on a monthly basis, for data entry and analyses.

In-Program Summary Reports

PRG developed summary reports to show agencies the results of their observational seat belt surveys and to give them suggestions on how the results might be used to motivate law enforcement to stay engaged in the program. Ideas for publicity and outreach were also provided in these reports, reminding LEAs on takeaways from the local focus groups, and including infographics and pointers on how to reach the community. PRG sent 12 summary reports to BCSO and 5 to APD. The lesser number sent to APD was due to their completing fewer "monthly" observational surveys. PRG also provided an interim report to BCSO and APD after the sixth month of program activities. The interim reports provided more details than the more frequent summary reports. (See Appendix C for a copy of the Interim Summary Reports; Appendix C1 for BCSO and Appendix C2 for APD.)

Program Evaluation

The demonstration efforts were evaluated looking at both process and outcome elements. Process and outcome information is presented in the sections that follow.

Process data helped PRG understand what each agency put into its program and in some instances why. The process evaluation addressed the following questions.

- Did program messaging use what was learned from the focus groups?
- Was the severity of non-usage made apparent and realized?
- Was law enforcement motivated to sustain program activities?

Outcome data were collected to see if each agency accomplished the program objectives. The outcome evaluation answered:

- Did contact with seat belt violators increase due to program activities?
- Was program messaging sustained?
- Did seat belt usage increase and if so, among whom the most?

Tracking Outreach and Publicity

Participating LEAs submitted monthly activity reports to PRG that indicated the amounts and types of program publicity and outreach activities they conducted. These summaries were required in the MOUs between PRG and the participating agencies. After their programs ended, PRG conducted internet searches and recorded the appearance of program publicity and outreach. PRG did that by combing social media sites (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) during the program period, including those administered by BCSO and APD, local news stations, and local government offices.

Tracking Citation Data

APD and BCSO agreed to provide citation data for evaluating the program. Both agencies provided PRG with historical data for speeding, adult seat belt, child belt, and cell phone use citations for years 2017, 2018, and 2019. Both agencies provided the same types of information for the 12-month program period. PRG used these data to determine if law enforcement actions toward seat belt violations changed during the program effort. PRG asked State Highway Safety Offices to provide citation data for control locations. PRG requested monthly counts of seat belt citations for 2017, 2018, and 2019. The SHSOs could only provide data for stepped-up periods of high-visibility enforcement and not for every month of each year. Neither Louisiana nor Idaho has a centralized statewide citation repository (i.e., uniform traffic citation system).

Observational Surveys of Seat Belt Use

PRG collected observational survey data using a scientific method for program evaluation. PRG timed the surveys at pre-program, mid-program, and post-program, in both Bingham County and Rapides Parish. PRG also conducted pre-program and post-program surveys in the control areas (Bonner County and Ouachita Parish). Observers recorded data on drivers, driver sex, driver age range, seat belt use, vehicle type, and road type.

Post-Program Discussions With Law Enforcement Points-of-Contact

Points-of-contact in APD and BCSO participated in a post-program discussion with PRG. In Alexandria a program partner also participated in a discussion with PRG. Feedback from these people helped gauge the impact of the project, changes in law enforcement perceptions, their interactions, and any other relevant insights due to program implementation.

Bingham County, Idaho, Program Results

Enforcement Effort

Bingham County’s enforcement ran from October 2020 to September 2021. Citation data provided by BCSO are shown in Figure 2. BCSO historical data indicated it issued a relatively low number of seat belt citations (solid black line) over the 3 years (2017-2019) leading up to the demonstration program (Figure 1). BCSO produced a notable increase in the number of seat belt citations in July and August 2020 prior to the demonstration project kickoff in October. The increase was believed, in-part, to be due to the local sheriff’s inclusion in a statewide Occupant Protection Task Force and his belief in using traffic enforcement as an effective countermeasure.

BCSO maintained an increased level of seat belt citations from the start of the demonstration’s program period through May 2021, compared to the 3 years prior, except for a noticeable decline in June 2021. The higher level of seat belt citations resumed in July. The seat belt citation increases are closely linked to speeding citation increases, which is most likely caused by Idaho’s secondary enforcement law. This law requires law enforcement officers to identify a primary violation like speeding before a seat belt violation can be enforced.

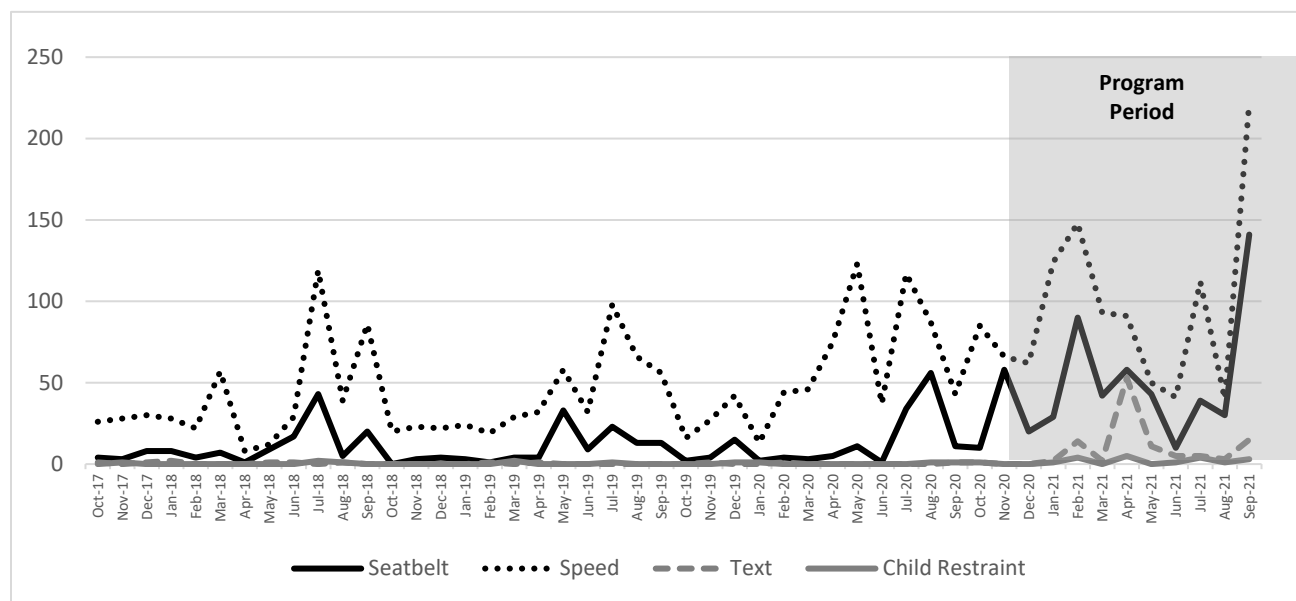


Figure 2. Bingham County Sheriff Office: Citations Issued October 2017 – September 2021

Figure 3 shows that BCSO issued the largest proportion of seat belt citations (solid black line) in the final month of the project period (25% of citations issued during September 2021). That was due, in part, because officers were willing and able to make a final push by using the remainder of the \$30,000 of grant money given to law enforcement under the agreement for this task. With or without the push in the last month of the demonstration program, seat belt citations increased dramatically during the program year, to a total a number nearly four times larger than any of the previous three years.

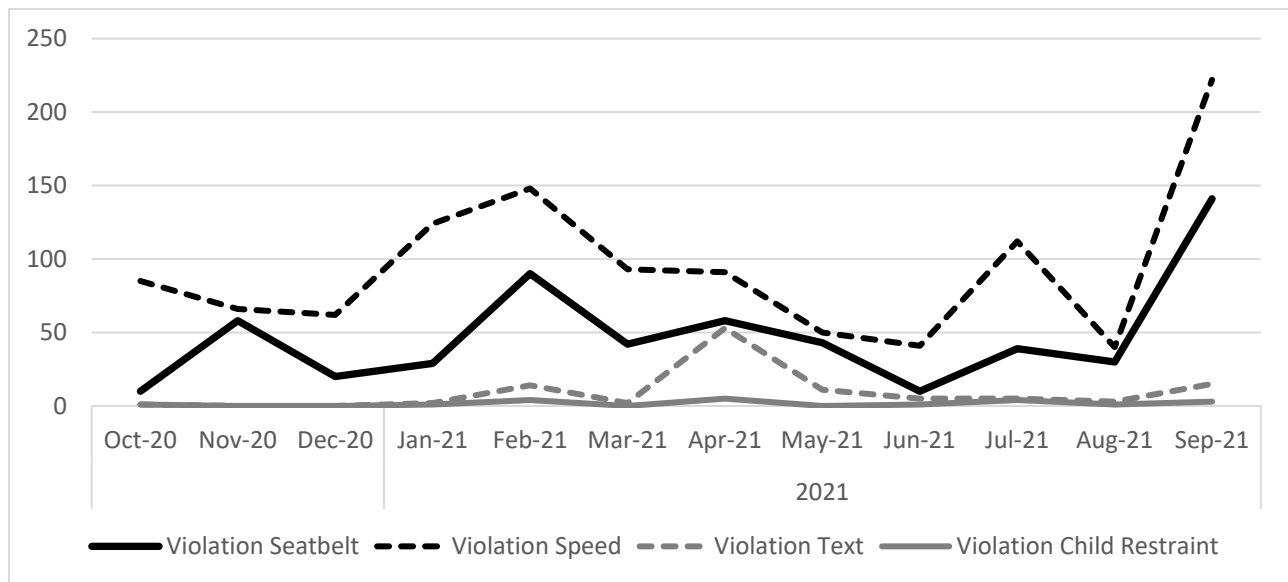


Figure 3. Bingham County Sheriff's Office: Citations Issued per Program Month

Publicity Effort

Sustaining publicity was a challenge in this demonstration location. Not surprisingly, BCSO, a smaller agency, had little to no expertise with *sustaining* traffic safety messaging. That said, BCSO put forth an effort to produce seat belt messages every month of the program, initially using its Facebook page, and then after COVID-19 restrictions receded, using more face-to-face contact with the public, which was a focus group suggestion.

Program evaluation found internet publicity present during the first 5 months of the program (October 2020 to February 2021) but not thereafter. However, evaluators were unable to obtain social media analytics because of BCSO staffing changes and limitations. A systematic search of the internet found 16 mentions of seat belt usage either on the BCSO Facebook page or posted on a news outlet's web page (Table 2). Among these, 11 of the 16 used either health or cost data to make the point that failure to wear a seat belt is an unhealthy and/or costly mistake. BCSO produced Facebook posts during the first 5 months (October to February) of the program period. PRG gave BCSO suggestions for the posts, including reminders to stress the low belt usage rate and identifying the lowest usage groups (e.g., men, pickup truck occupants). Local news media provided coverage in November 2020 after the program's kickoff.

BCSO implemented more community outreach from March to September 2021. That included leaving brochures in stores, one school presentation, handing out information cards at one job fair, and putting up banners at the entrance to the State fair. Its outreach continued to stress the health and safety benefits that seat belts provide, but also often connoted enforcement. A variety of officer and ranks were involved in the various types of publicity and outreach, including three lieutenants, three sergeants, two corporals, an unknown number of deputies, and a dispatcher. BCSO was not asked to capture the number of program materials handed out, content of presentations, nor estimates of the size of audience reached, although that would have been helpful for a better understanding of the community outreach. That said, the evaluation at the very least found evidence of BCSO's efforts to generate monthly publicity.

Table 2. Bingham County Sheriff Office Seat Belt Publicity

| | 12-Month Demonstration Program Period | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|----------|-----|------|------|------|----------|
| | 2020 | | | 2021 | | | | | | | | |
| | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. ¹ | Apr. | May | Jun. | Jul. | Aug. | Sept. |
| BCSO Social Media | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Facebook Post (n) | √ (1) | √ (1) | √ (3) | √ (3) | √ (2) | | | | | | | |
| News Stations | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Web Site Post | | √ (5) | | | | | | | | | | |
| BCSO Other | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Brochures in Stores | | | | | | | √ | √ | √ | | √ | |
| School Presentation | | | | | | √ (1) | | | | | | |
| Job Fair | | | | | | | √ (1) | | | | | |
| Banners State Fair | | | | | | | | | | | | √ (1) |

¹Covid restrictions eased.

Supporting Efforts

PRG supported BCSO in several ways, providing the TAG; monthly and interim summaries that documented progress and results, and personal contacts with the BCSO point-of-contact by telephone and email (typically several times monthly).

Prior to program kickoff, BCSO’s point-of-contact reviewed the TAG with PRG. During an exit interview, the BCSO point-of-contact indicated the helpfulness of the TAG to get the program up and running. He felt the guide would be useful if other agencies wanted to conduct a similar program.

PRG sent monthly summaries to BCSO to encourage engagement and assist with spreading seat belt messaging. PRG also provided the more detailed interim report mid-way through the program period (see Appendix C.1). Both types of report summarized BCSO’s seat belt observation results and provided ideas as to how and where in the county BCSO might want to increase seat belt messaging. For example, the interim reports identified lower use groups (e.g., male occupants and pickup truck occupants) where there was most room for improvement. The summaries even had ready-to-use graphics with relevant local data for social media posts (see Appendix D for examples of ready-made graphics).

In summary, BCSO was most apt at conducting seat belt enforcement. That’s not surprising given the sheriff’s role in a statewide Occupant Protection Task Force and his belief that traffic enforcement works as an effective countermeasure. Support efforts were not needed for that programmatic element, given traffic enforcement was part of the agency’s normal procedures.

Deputies were tasked with conducting monthly seat belt observations in hope of increasing their interest and engagement with increasing compliance. A small number of deputies received in-person training prior to kicking off the program. The TAG included data collection forms and relatively simple procedures to follow. BCSO did not always complete the observational surveys

according to procedures. Observational surveys appeared to receive less priority within the agency than other program elements (i.e., traffic enforcement, outreach). BCSO explained that officers are accustomed to seeing seat belt violators and that the informal survey results did not do much to motivate officers who “see the same people in the same vehicles not following the rules.”

PRG offered BCSO support and information in regular intervals to help sustain messaging. Social media appeared the first 5 months of the program period, but face-to-face interactions were clearly hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. When COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, BCSO attempted to engage more face-to-face with the community. Regular contact by email and phone helped keep everyone aware of the latest program developments but did not appear all that useful in spurring additional publicity.

Observational Survey Results

Observers recorded data on nearly 10,000 vehicles over the course of this project (N=9,922). A total of 6,424 drivers were observed in the program location of Bingham County, and 3,498 drivers were observed in the control location of Bonner County. There were three rounds of observations in Bingham (baseline, mid-, and post-program), and two rounds of observations in Bonner (timed with the baseline and post-program observations in Bingham). Although data from all waves are reported in the tables below, only the pre- and post-data were used in the statistical analyses as the focus was the change in seat belt use from baseline to final post. PRG’s roadside observers noted seat belt use (yes/no) for drivers, along with sex (man, woman), estimated age (16-34, 35-59, 60+), and vehicle type (car, pickup truck, SUV, van).

To evaluate the observational survey results, PRG employed several binary logistic regression models. This is because PRG hypothesized that the program would increase overall seat belt use in the test site, relative to the control site. PRG also hypothesized that these relative increases would be present in several subgroups, including all sexes, age groups, and road types (country versus city roads). However, PRG did not establish a priori hypotheses for interaction terms between these subgroups since these terms are difficult to parse. Therefore, PRG used a separate binary logistic regression model for each analysis, rather than a single model with third-order interaction terms.

The overall driver seat belt use results are posted in Table 3 for the binary logistic regression analyzing the interaction of baseline/post and program/control on seat belt usage (see Appendix E1 for model specifications and regression outputs). The interaction was not significant ($\chi^2(1) = 0.29$, NS). Although the main effects of Wave ($\chi^2(1) = 8.22$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.66, 0.92]) and Location ($\chi^2(1) = 6.13$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [1.04, 1.18]) were significant, the lack of a significant interaction indicates that the change in seat belt use from baseline to post was not a function of the program. Overall belt use rates were higher in the control location, but both control and program showed a drop in usage from baseline to post-program.

Table 3. Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location (% Belted)

| | Baseline August 2020 | Mid March 2020 | Post October 2021 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Bingham Co. (%) (N observed) | 81.0% (2,032) | 80.8% (2,305) | 75.7% (2,003) |
| Bonner Co. (%) (N observed) | 82.8% (1,516) | - | 79.0% (1,974) |

PRG also used a binary logistic regression to examine the change in seat belt use by sex of driver. Women generally had higher seat belt use than men. Analyses were conducted on men and women separately. Men did show a significant drop in belt use from baseline to post ($\chi^2(1) = 9.16, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.59, 0.89]$), but that difference did not differ significantly between control and program locations as indicated by the lack of a significant interaction ($\chi^2(1) = 0.01, \text{NS}$). Women drivers did not show a significant Location x Wave Interaction ($\chi^2(1) = 1.60, \text{NS}$), nor were any of the simple effects significant. Belt use by driver sex is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location (% Belted), by Sex

| Sex | Location | Baseline | Mid | Post |
|----------------|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Male Drivers | Bingham Co. (%) (N observed) | 74.7% (1,165) | 75.8% (1,300) | 67.9% (1,130) |
| | Bonner Co. (%) (N observed) | 79.6% (898) | - | 73.9% (1,205) |
| Female Drivers | Bingham Co. (%) (N observed) | 89.5% (867) | 87.2% (1,005) | 85.8% (872) |
| | Bonner Co. (%) (N observed) | 87.5% (618) | - | 86.8% (763) |

PRG conducted a binary logistic regression for each age group (16-34, 35-59, 60+). Seat belt use rates for each group are reported in Table 5. There was no significant Wave x Location interaction in the youngest group ($\chi^2(1) = 1.91, \text{NS}$). There was a significant change in seat belt use from pre- to post- ($\chi^2(1) = 8.78, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.35, 0.81]$), but the change did not differ across program/control location. A similar pattern of results was seen for the 60+ group, with no significant interaction ($\chi^2(1) = 0.79, \text{NS}$), but a significant change in seat belt use from baseline to post ($\chi^2(1) = 6.61, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.38, 0.88]$). The absence of a significant interaction indicates that this change did not differ across locations.

Table 5. Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location (% Belted), by Age Group

| Age Group | Location | Baseline | Mid | Post |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 16-34 | Bingham Co. (%) (N observed) | 83.2% (589) | 82.2% (706) | 79.1% (654) |
| | Bonner Co. (%) (N observed) | 83.9% (566) | - | 73.6% (163) |

| Age Group | Location | Baseline | Mid | Post |
|-----------|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 35-59 | Bingham Co. (%) (N observed) | 78.9% (1,014) | 79.6% (1,105) | 71.8% (885) |
| | Bonner Co. (%) (N observed) | 79.9% (651) | - | 79.4% (1,410) |
| 60+ | Bingham Co. (%) (N observed) | 83.3% (429) | 81.3% (493) | 78.2% (459) |
| | Bonner Co. (%) (N observed) | 87.2% (298) | - | 79.8% (401) |

The 35-to-59 age group did show a significant Wave x Location interaction ($\chi^2(1) = 4.96, p < .05$, 95% CI [0.51, 0.96]), with the program location showing a decrease in belt use from pre- to post- while the control location remained stable (Location, $\chi^2(1) = 17.36, p < .05$, 95% CI [1.25, 1.84]).

Observations were conducted at two types of sites, county roads and city roads. The last set of analyses looked at these two types of roads. PRG also used a binary logistic regression to examine road types. Neither county nor city roads showed a significant Location x Wave interaction (City: ($\chi^2(1) = 1.87$ NS; County: ($\chi^2(1) = 0.40$, NS). Table 6 shows the seat belt use rates for both program and control sites across the different waves of observations. City roads showed a significant effect of location, suggesting that belt use was overall higher in the control location than in the program location, ($\chi^2(1) = 11.08, p < .05$, 95% CI [1.16, 1.78]), but again, the absence of an interaction indicates this was not caused by the program in place, but instead may reflect pre-existing differences between the two counties. County roads showed a significant effect of Wave ($\chi^2(1) = 5.70, p < .05$, 95% CI [0.60, 0.95]), with seat belt use decreasing from baseline to post. Here, too, the absence of a significant interaction indicates that this change did not differ across program/control locations.

Table 6. Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location (% Belted), by Road

| Road Type | Location | Baseline | Mid | Post |
|-----------|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| City | Bingham Co. (%) (N observed) | 81.6% (980) | 79.8% (1,095) | 73.8% (947) |
| | Bonner Co. (%) (N observed) | 83.5% (697) | - | 80.2% (980) |
| County | Bingham Co. (%) (N observed) | 80.4% (1,052) | 81.7% (1,210) | 77.4% (1,056) |
| | Bonner Co. (%) (N observed) | 82.3% (819) | - | 77.8% (994) |

PRG concluded that there is no indication that the program had an impact on seat belt use in Bingham County. Belt use was generally higher in the Bonner County (control) to begin with, but had the program had an impact, an increase in belt use should have been observed in Bingham County, and ideally this increase would have been relatively greater than any change seen in the control location. This did not happen. Seat belt use decreased from baseline to post in both the program and control locations. Depending on the breakdown, that decrease was not

always significant. Still, this raises the question of whether something else was happening that may have led drivers to buckle less (e.g., seasonality, pandemic-related, fatigue, drop in perceived enforcement).

Post-Program Discussion With Bingham County Sheriff's Office

The program evaluation included a discussion with BCSO days after the program period ended. The discussion provided the following insights.

Program Hurdles

The COVID-19 pandemic was a big program hurdle. Many businesses closed, making it difficult to find any interest in forming partnerships. Officer-power decreased due to the COVID-19 pandemic and even the local jail shut down.

A BCSO interviewee also mentioned the \$10 fine for violators, believing it too low to motivate resistant violators to change behavior. The interviewee explained that deputies see the same people not buckling up, driving the same vehicle, day after day.

According to the interviewee, securing more community partners might have made a stronger publicity effort, but that was largely thwarted by the pandemic. Another factor mentioned was diminishing interest from deputies to make new partnerships in the community. Deputies were not motivated by the flat results of their seat belt observations and subsequently interest in the program sometimes “fizzled.”

Changes in the Department's Focus on Seat Belts

Engaging with community members about seat belt safety was not considered a priority prior to the demonstration program. Going forward, BCSO plans to include seat belt education in programs like personal safety classes, job fairs, and presentations at schools. Mid-way through the program period, when COVID-19 restrictions were eased, deputies began visiting and keeping local convenience stores stocked with information brochures. That brought requests from groups for BCSO to present seat belt education. According to the BCSO interviewee, that is when the agency realized the usefulness of inserting seat belt education into programs and events. BCSO is a firm believer in traffic enforcement, but here again, there is a belief that the fine level for a violation is too low (\$10) to effect change in behavior. That said, according to the interviewee, more often than not, officers issued citations on the road without explaining the benefits of seat belt safety.

Thoughts on Replicating the Demonstrated Approach

The BCSO interviewee believed that other small, rural LEAs could replicate the demonstration program, but it would require finding the right people in the agency to put in the necessary time and effort. While the interviewee thought the TAG was helpful in setting up the program and would be helpful to others looking to set up rural programs in their jurisdictions, he felt that the TAG imparts quite a bit of technical information that would be potentially new and unfamiliar to rural law officers. Most rural officers are not trained in crafting media messages, sustaining publicity, locating local data for publicity, and conducting observational surveys. Agencies considering taking on a program like this must possess or be prepared to develop the skills necessary to engage with the community.

Summary Points on the Bingham County Program

- BCSO implemented 12 months of seat belt enforcement and publicity. The COVID-19 pandemic hampered the effective deployment of some program elements, namely community outreach with the rural populace.
- BCSO's enforcement efforts clearly focused on seat belt violators. Seat belt citations were larger in number nearly every month of the program period compared to the 4 years leading up to implementation. Citations for seat belt violations increased nearly four-fold compared to years leading up to the program. Participation in the demonstration program and funding for enforcement efforts factored in the increase in number of citations. The sheriff's involvement in a Statewide Occupant Protection Task Force was believed influential to the program's trajectory from the outset. BCSO, however, stated that a \$10 fine for a seat belt violation (alone) would not work to solve low belt use. A higher fine level is thought necessary if using enforcement (in part) as the countermeasure. It is interesting to note here that focus groups participants showed a high level of interest in messages about personal financial costs and/or lost workdays due to an unrestrained crash while appearing less motivated by the fear of getting a ticket.
- BCSO's program included publicity for all but one month of the program period. Publicity included social media, printed and educational material, and presentations once COVID-19 restrictions were eased. BCSO command staff wanted to use more face-to-face outreach with the rural populace, but COVID-19 thwarted prospects. BCSO lacked in-house expertise (i.e., a PIO) to staff a more thorough or sophisticated messaging effort throughout the year-long demonstration. That said, BCSO believed seat belt education will remain present in future presentations and that more agency staff will be tasked to develop partnerships within the local rural community.
- BCSO thought the support and information provided by PRG useful, however, COVID-19 made full implementation difficult at times.
- BCSO appeared less motivated with conducting monthly observational surveys compared to the other program elements (i.e., enforcement and publicity/outreach). BCSO explained that non-usage in the community is in-view daily and conducting observational surveys became redundant. To that end, observational surveys did not function to motivate deputies.
- BCSO's point-of-contact believed the program could and should be replicated in more normal times (i.e., no COVID-19) when more face-to-face contacts could be accomplished.
- Results from observational (scientific) surveys of seat belt use provided no indication that the program had an impact on seat belt use in Bingham County.

Alexandria, Louisiana (Rapides Parish), Program Results

Enforcement Effort

APD's demonstration period ran from November 2020 to October 2021. Citation data provided by APD indicated larger numbers of seat belt citations in 2017 and 2018 compared to the 2 years that followed (Figure 3). APD explained the decrease was due to COVID-19 and the aftermaths of named severe storms and hurricanes that brought flooding and wind damage to the area. The storms affecting the area included Barry (Category 1) and Olga (Tropical Storm) in 2019; Delta (Category 2) and Zeta (Category 3) in 2020. These challenges stretched the department thinner than usual, so APD did not participate in the *Click It or Ticket* campaign in 2021, unlike preceding years. Additionally, APD did not use seat belt safety grants offered by the Louisiana Traffic Safety Commission for fiscal years 2020 and 2021, further driving down the number of traffic citations. This is a divergence from preceding years when APD did use seat belt safety grants.

Throughout the demonstration program period, COVID-19 caused disruptions, as did continuing severe storms, including Claudette (Tropical Storm) and Ida (Category 4) in 2021. APD explained the single biggest factor influencing the number of traffic citations issued was vanishing officer resources available to do traffic safety. At the start of the demonstration program effort, APD had 12- to 15 officers to draw from for seat belt enforcement, but by the end of the demonstration program period there were only 4 traffic enforcement officers available to work the program.

Monthly counts of seat belt citations (solid black line) rarely exceeded speeding citations (dotted black line) prior to the start of the program (Figure 4). That changed during the program year when APD focused a greater amount of attention on seat belt compliance relative to speeding (Figure 5). This is the result of an increase in seat belt citations and a decrease in speeding citations. This was likely due, at least in part, to the demonstration program funding and the effects of COVID-19 that diminished staff members available for traffic enforcement.

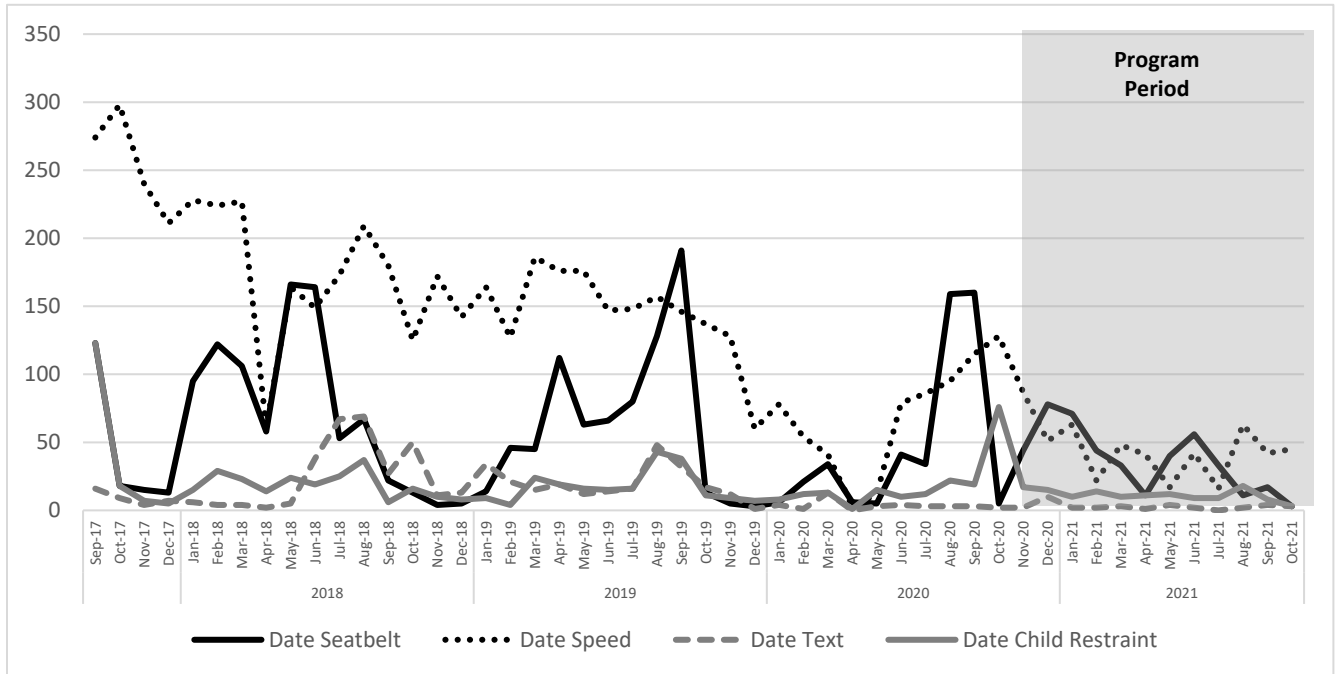


Figure 4. Alexandria Police Department: Citations Issued September 2017 – October 2021

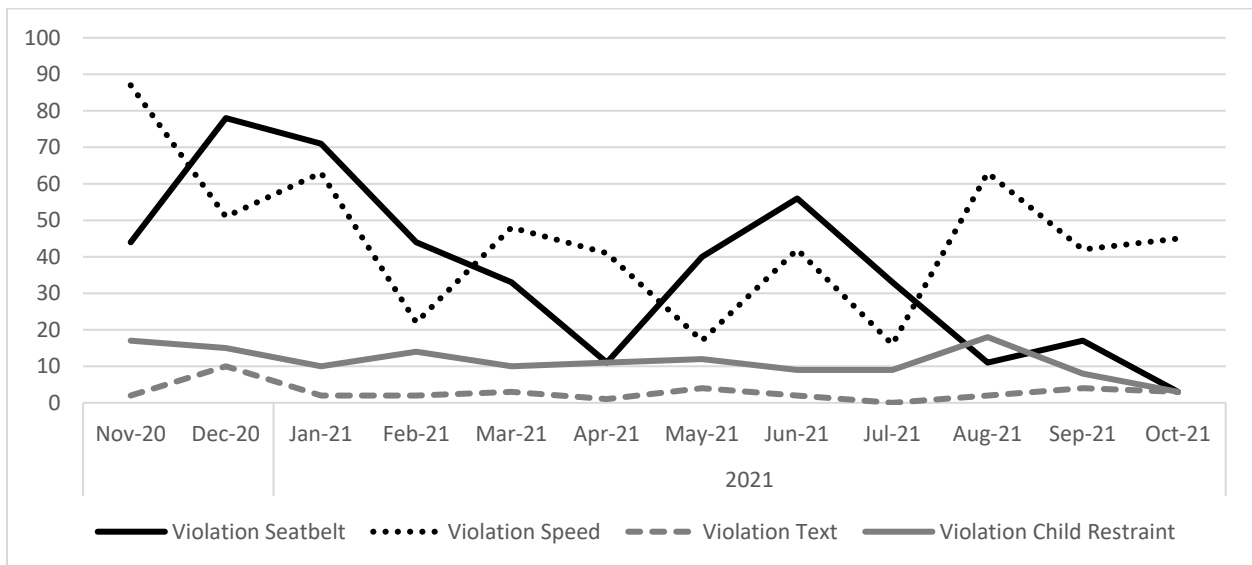


Figure 5. Alexandria Police Department: Citations Issued per Program Month

Publicity Effort

APD is not a small agency serving a rural area, but rather a municipal agency that polices thousands of rural travelers entering and exiting the city’s incorporated areas daily. Even with its relatively large size (authorized staff size is 311 sworn officers), APD found it challenging to sustain program publicity and staffing problems were evident throughout the program period. The program was largely absent of face-to-face outreach (suggested by focus groups), due to loss in staff and COVID-19 protocols that limited person-to-person contacts. Compounding problems were two PIO resignations from APD during the 12-month program period.

APD still tried to kick off the effort and sustain messaging. APD kicked off the program with interviews and press releases in November 2020. Following the kickoff, APD attempted to sustain publicity using social media, successfully averaging three Facebook posts per month. APD reached out to community partners later in spring 2021, who provided some support. One partner, a regional transportation coordinator for the CenLA Coalition, designed and printed bookmarks using the program’s hashtag (#BuckleUpRapides). An APD officer distributed the bookmarks to all libraries and colleges in the parish. Plans to distribute fliers in utility bills to reach a parish-wide audience were later thwarted due to COVID-19 pandemic-related delays and staff resignations. APD also reported that the PIO attended a “couple” of community/neighborhood watch meetings in spring 2021 after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted but did not report the months this took place.

The program evaluation included internet searches soon after APD’s program ended. However, evaluators were unable to obtain social media analytics because of staffing changes and limitations at APD. The searches recorded the number of times the demonstration program publicity and outreach appeared. PRG found 32 mentions of seat belt usage either on APD’s Facebook page or posted on a news outlet’s web page (Table 7). Among these, only 3 messages included health or cost data in messaging. APD posted program messages (using #BuckleUpRapides) for all but one month of the program period. APD issued several social media posts most months, 3 or more posts appeared during 5 months of the 12-month program period. PRG provided readymade social media posts to APD for the first few months of the program until APD began creating the posts on their own. Most posts included a general message (e.g., “#BuckleUpRapides It’s a Life or Death Situation,” or “Seat Belts Save Lives!”). Nine messages were enforcement centered, sharing the cost of a seat belt violation or using *Click It or Ticket* along with #BuckleUpRapides. Two APD sergeants recorded a short PSA-type video focused on the reason the officers choose to wear seat belts. At the program start, three news outlets covered the story online and one ran a TV story focused on the program. Not included in the table was a tweet from the city of Alexandria (January 2020) about the on-going demonstration project.

Table 7. Alexandria Police Department Seat Belt Publicity

| | 12-Month Program Period | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | 2020 | | | 2021 | | | | | | | | |
| | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | Jun. | Jul. | Aug. | Sept. | Oct. |
| Alexandria Police Dept. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Facebook Post (n) | √ (2) | | √ (2) | √ (1) | √ (2) | √ (3) | √ (4) | √ (2) | √ (2) | √ (6) | √ (4) | √ (3) |
| Twitter | √ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Press Release | √ (1) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| News Stations | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TV News Interviews | √ (1) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Web Site Post | √ (2) | | √ (1) | | | √ (1) | | | | | | |

Supporting Efforts

PRG provided APD with support in a few ways: providing the TAG; monthly/interim summaries that documented progress and results; and personal contacts with PRG's point-of-contact by telephone and/or email (typically, multiple times monthly).

Prior to program kickoff, APD's point-of-contact reviewed the TAG with PRG. PRG then sent in-program monthly summaries to APD intending to encourage engagement and assist with sustaining seat belt messaging. PRG also provided a more detailed interim report mid-way through the program period (see Appendix C.2 for the APD Interim Report). The monthly and interim reports always provided a summary of APD's latest seat belt observation results and provided ideas as to how APD might focus efforts.

Alexandria Police Department, as previously noted, had problems with staffing shortages during the program period and APD welcomed PRG's support. PRG routinely provided support in several formats. For example, PRG provided training to APD pre- and mid-program to ensure the PIOs and other traffic enforcement officers understood the program elements. PRG also provided ready-made social media posts to the two PIOs and offered suggestions for creating their own posts. PRG provided ideas and suggestions for publicity and outreach events throughout the program period and communicated with program partners in attempts to keep publicity on-going.

Prior to program kickoff, PRG met with APD in-person to provide training on how to conduct seat belt observations and then provided data entry and simple analysis each time APD completed the observational seat belt survey (n=5). PRG provided data summary reports to APD that explained their survey results and offered suggestions on how to use the results to enhance publicity, outreach, and enforcement efforts.

PRG delivered a more detailed interim summary report to APD after the sixth month of the program. That report provided APD with results from their officers' seat belt observation results and information on where in the county APD might want to increase seat belt messaging. The report identified lower use groups (e.g., males and pickup truck occupants) where there was most room for improvement. PRG included ready to use graphics, using local data, for social media posts in the report (See Appendix D for examples of ready-made graphics).

Observational Survey Results

PRG completed scientific surveys to evaluate the program and its effects on seat belt usage. PRG observed nearly 15,000 vehicles over the course of this project (N=14,553). That included 9,302 drivers in Rapides Parish, and 5,251 drivers in the control location of Ouachita Parish. PRG completed three rounds of observations in Rapides Parish (baseline, mid-, and post-program), and two rounds of observations in Ouachita Parish (timed with the baseline and post-program observations in Rapides Parish). Although data from all waves are reported in the tables below, only the baseline and post data were used in the statistical analyses as the study's focus was on the change in seat belt use from baseline to final post. PRG's observers noted seat belt use (yes/no) for drivers, along with sex (man, woman), estimated age (16-34, 35-59, 60+), and vehicle type (car, pickup truck, SUV, van).

To evaluate the observational survey results, PRG employed several binary logistic regression models. This is because PRG hypothesized that the program would increase overall seat belt use in the test site, relative to the control site. PRG also hypothesized that these relative increases would be present in several subgroups, including all sexes, age groups, and road types (country

versus city roads). However, PRG did not establish a priori hypotheses for interaction terms between these subgroups since these terms are difficult to parse. Therefore, PRG used a separate binary logistic regression model for each analysis, rather than a single model with third order interaction terms.

The overall driver seat belt use results are posted in Table 8 for the binary logistic regression analyzing the interaction of baseline/post and program/control on seat belt usage (see Appendix E2 for model specifications and regression outputs). The interaction was significant ($\chi^2(1) = 9.64, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.14, 1.76]$), indicating that the change in seat belt use from baseline to post was different between control and program locations. There was a significant effect of Wave ($\chi^2(1) = 7.52, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.67, 0.94]$) but no effect of Location ($\chi^2(1) = 0.05, \text{ NS}$). Whereas seat belt use increased from baseline to post in Rapides Parish (program), it decreased in Ouachita Parish (control).

Table 8. Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location (% Belted)

| | Baseline Sept. 2020 | Mid March 2021 | Post Nov. 2021 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rapides Parish (%) (N observed) | 84.3% (3,042) | 86.7% (3,256) | 85.8% (2,896) |
| Ouachita Parish (%) (N observed) | 88.2% (2,029) | - | 85.6% (3,222) |

PRG also used a binary logistic regression to examine the change in seat belt use by sex of driver. Women generally had higher seat belt use than men. PRG also analyzed men and women separately. The binary logistic regression done for male drivers showed no significant interaction of wave x location ($\chi^2(1) = 2.32, \text{ NS}$), and no significant effect for either simple effects of wave or location. There was however a significant Wave x Location interaction for women ($\chi^2(1) = 7.93, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.18, 2.48]$). The two main effects were significant as well (Wave: $\chi^2(1) = 9.01, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.50, 0.87]$; Location: $\chi^2(1) = 6.21, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.59, 0.94]$). As seen in Table 9, women in Rapides Parish showed an increase in belt use from baseline to post whereas women in the control location showed a decrease in belt use.

Table 9. Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location (% Belted), by Sex

| Sex | Location | Baseline | Mid | Post |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Male Drivers | Rapides Parish (%) (N observed) | 80.2% (1,699) | 82.9% (1,818) | 81.4% (1,522) |
| | Ouachita Parish (%) (N observed) | 85.3% (1,078) | - | 83.5% (1,640) |
| Female Drivers | Rapides Parish (%) (N observed) | 89.6% (1,343) | 91.5% (1,438) | 90.6% (1,373) |
| | Ouachita Parish (%) (N observed) | 91.6% (950) | - | 87.7% (1,581) |

PRG conducted a binary logistic regression for each age group (16-34, 35-59, 60+). Table 10 displays the seat belt use rates for each group. There was no significant Wave x Location

interaction in the youngest group ($\chi^2(1) = 2.67$, NS). There was a significant simple effect of Wave ($\chi^2(1) = 5.54$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.58, 0.95]), likely associated with the decrease in Ouachita Parish, and Location ($\chi^2(1) = 12.49$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.49, 0.82]), likely associated with the generally higher belt use rates in Rapides Parish.

Table 10. Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location (% Belted), by Age Group

| Age Group | Location | Baseline | Mid | Post |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 16-34 | Rapides Parish (%) (N observed) | 87.0% (872) | 87.3% (967) | 87.2% (814) |
| | Ouachita Parish (%) (N observed) | 85.3% (777) | - | 81.2% (1,110) |
| 35-59 | Rapides Parish (%) (N observed) | 82.1% (1,698) | 84.9% (1,676) | 84.5% (1,538) |
| | Ouachita Parish (%) (N observed) | 89.2% (955) | - | 86.3% (1,470) |
| 60+ | Rapides Parish (%) (N observed) | 87.3% (472) | 90.7% (613) | 87.3% (544) |
| | Ouachita Parish (%) (N observed) | 92.6% (297) | - | 91.4% (642) |

The 60+ group showed no significant interaction ($\chi^2(1) = 0.25$, NS), but did have a significant simple effect of Location ($\chi^2(1) = 5.27$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [1.07, 2.25]). This suggests that belt use overall was higher in Ouachita Parish for this group, but there were no differential changes from baseline to post across locations.

The middle age group did show a significant Wave x Location interaction ($\chi^2(1) = 7.57$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [1.14, 2.13]), with the program location showing an increase in belt use from pre- to post- while the control location showed a decrease (simple effect of Wave, $\chi^2(1) = 4.39$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.59, 0.98]).

Observations were conducted at two types of sites: non-city roads and city roads. The last set of analyses looked at these two types of roads. PRG also used a binary logistic regression to examine road types. The analysis on city roads showed no significant Location x Wave interaction (City: $\chi^2(1) = 0.69$, NS) and no significant simple effects. There were no changes from baseline to post nor between program and control locations (Table 11).

Table 11. Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location (% Belted), by Road

| Road Type | Location | Baseline | Mid | Post |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| City | Rapides Parish (%) (N observed) | 85.8% (1,594) | 85.9% (1,795) | 86.0% (1,596) |
| | Ouachita Parish (%) (N observed) | 87.4% (780) | - | 86.1% (1,751) |
| Non-City | Rapides Parish (%) (N observed) | 82.7% (1,448) | 87.7% (1,461) | 85.5% (1,300) |
| | Ouachita Parish (%) (N observed) | 88.7% (1,249) | - | 85.0% (1,471) |

Non-city roads did show a significant interaction: ($\chi^2(1) = 11.94, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.26, 2.33]$). Table 9 shows the seat belt use rates on non-city roads increased from baseline to post in Rapides Parish while they decreased in Ouachita Parish. The main effect of Wave was significant ($\chi^2(1) = 8.12, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.57, 0.90]$).

The survey data indicated that the program achieved positive change in usage in Rapides Parish. Significant interactions indicate that changes in belt use differed across program and control locations overall, and specifically in women drivers, drivers in the 35-to-59 age group, as well as drivers on non-city roads. The gains in seat belt use in Rapides Parish were sometimes small, but often paired with a decrease in Ouachita Parish. Thus, the fact that belt use increased/stayed stable in the program location while decreasing in the control location is encouraging.

Post-Program Discussion With Alexandria Police Department

The program evaluation included a discussion with APD days after the program period ended. An RTC for the CenLA Coalition who assisted with some of the publicity and outreach also participated in a discussion. These discussions provided the following insights.

Program Hurdles

An APD interviewee explained staffing as the project's number one hurdle. APD kept contacts to a minimum both within the agency and when out in public during COVID-19 flare ups. Louisiana was a hot-spot for COVID-19 early and often. Twice during the program period 15 to 20 officers were out with illness due to the virus.

APD also lost officers over the course of the (program) year. The unit responsible for the demonstration program went from 12 to 15 strong to only 4 by the end of the program period. Overall, APD lost 50 officers in a year-and-a-half and none of those positions were re-filled. In addition, two PIOs resigned during the 12-month implementation period. That said, officer motivation was never said to be a problem across the agency. The APD interviewee said the program kept officers motivated because they see bad crashes and the after-effects first-hand and observational surveys reminded them there was still room for improvement. The APD interviewee explained that seat belt enforcement is normal for traffic officers who were instructed to "not cut any slack with seat belt violations."

Changes in the Department's Focus on Seat Belts

The APD interviewee explained that he had never used community groups, nor would he have thought about it before taking on the demonstration project. He explained the agency now views meeting with community groups as a useful activity for improving seat belt use. The APD interviewee was aware that community meetings were attended by an APD Sergeant (late in the program when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted and meetings resumed) where he distributed educational material like bookmarks. Again, COVID-19 prevented opportunities to do more outreach for this demonstration project. The RTC suggested seat belts on rural roads remained an issue in the area in that three people died over the most recent Thanksgiving holiday period (November 24–29, 2021), one month after the program ended and two of those were in rural areas, none wearing seat belts.

Thoughts on Replicating the Demonstrated Approach

The APD point-of-contact believed the 12-month program period was ideal and similar to other grant projects that APD has worked on. He also believed that other LEAs could and should replicate the demonstration program. He suggested dedicating 2 to 3 officers each month to do the seat belt observations based on the staffing difficulties they experienced. Using the same 2 to 3 officers for observations would likely save time and effort rather than training someone new/different each month and that might make the results more reliable. The TSC contact expressed liking the program template and said it should be able to work in most rural areas. The RTC interviewee suggested it might be beneficial to use U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service agencies and other places farmers congregate for program messaging in future iterations of the program. Farmers, in her opinion, fit the profile for those who travel in rural areas.

Summary Points on the Alexandria, Louisiana (Rapides Parish), Program

- APD implemented 12 months of seat belt enforcement and publicity. Program efforts were hampered by an inordinate number of destructive weather-related events, the COVID-19 pandemic, and staffing shortages.
- APD's program publicity initially included a mix of social media posts, interviews, and press releases. APD's community outreach received some support from an RTC for the CenLA Coalition. An APD officer distributed bookmarks to all libraries and colleges in the parish and a PIO attended a small number of community/neighborhood watch meetings, also in spring 2021, after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.
- APD had two PIOs resign during the program period. Although focus groups with rural community members pointed to partnerships and face-to-face outreach as a potentially useful approach, those were not implemented to the extent APD leadership wanted. COVID-19 protocols within APD and the community did not permit face-to-face interaction in community settings over most of the program period. Again, loss of staffing added to difficulties in sustaining outreach efforts toward the end of the program period.
- APD citations were declining before the demonstration program began and the total number of citations issued for traffic infractions remained low during the program period. That said, APD implemented 12 months of sustained enforcement focused on seat belt violators; that was apparent by the number and proportion of seat belt citations relative to other citation types (i.e., speeding).
- APD thought the support provided by PRG was useful; however, circumstances, namely COVID-19, made full implementation of program processes difficult. APD had difficulty conducting monthly observational seat belt surveys due to extreme staffing shortages (conducted 5 observational seat belt surveys over the 12-month implementation period). The APD interviewee said observational surveys motivated participating officers who "often see bad crashes and then see the results of the observations."

- The APD point-of-contact believes the program could and should be replicated in more normal times (i.e., no COVID-19).
- Results from observational (scientific) surveys of seat belt use indicated that the program achieved positive change in usage in Rapides Parish. Significant interactions indicate that changes in belt use differed across program and control locations overall, and specifically in women drivers, drivers in the 35-to-59 age group, as well as drivers on non-city roads. The gains in seat belt use in Rapides Parish were sometimes small, but often paired with a decrease in Ouachita Parish. Thus, the fact that belt use increased/stayed stable in the program location while decreasing in the control location is encouraging.

Project Summary

The project presented here set out to oversee the development and implementation of two demonstration programs focused on rural populations. A primary project objective was to assess whether messaging that uses seat belt use rates, combined with the reality of health care costs, lost wages, and overall financial impact of unbelted crashes would resonate within a rural community, and ultimately increase seat belt use. Another project objective was to see if using a “locally guided” approach would motivate law enforcement to sustain engagement with the community on matters of seat belt safety and compliance. To that end, NHTSA directed PRG to conduct focus groups with local rural residents and to include their thoughts and insights in the development and delivery of program messaging.

PRG used several types of data to inform efforts implemented by local LEAs. Those included focus groups findings, fatality crash data, observational data on seat belt usage and health and safety information, including days lost from work and costs associated with crash injuries.

PRG provided support in the form of a TAG. PRG made in-person visits to review the guide and to cover all its elements including observational survey training, how-to material for publicizing efforts and steps to take to evaluate a program. PRG followed up monthly, and often weekly, with points-of-contact in the participating agencies. PRG also provided routine summary reports (monthly or bi-monthly) showing the most recent program results along with materials to help with program messaging.

Both demonstration locations experienced hurdles, both natural and man-made. Several named storms and the COVID-19 pandemic made implementation difficult. Even still, LEAs put forth efforts to sustain focus on improving seat belt usage among their rural residents.

PRG provides the following answers to the questions posed about the demonstration efforts.

Did focus group findings influence the demonstration program approach?

Rural community members provided insight into preferred messaging content and distribution. The participating LEAs were willing to use what was learned from the rural residents; specifically, the focus group participants indicated that they wanted more community outreach and face-to-face communication with the police. However, COVID-19 and related staffing shortages made it nearly impossible to sustain that common recommendation.

Did focus group findings do anything to motivate officers or influence their approach to non-use?

In Rapides Parish the APD provided little evidence to suggest focus group findings influenced their approach to *enforcement*. Grant funding, first and foremost, appeared to motivate the agency to focus on seat belt violations. APD officers were already accustomed to focusing on seat belt violators and regularly worked grant funded seat belt enforcement projects. APD’s leadership appeared receptive to the focus group suggestion for more community outreach and developing community partnerships, but again, COVID-19 complicated sustaining outreach. In Bingham County the focus group findings likely had little to do with *enforcing compliance* with the law, but similar to Alexandria, they did appear to influence the thinking of BCSO leadership who wanted to reach out more to the community, but again, as in Rapides Parish, COVID-19 curtailed outreach efforts.

Did the participating law enforcement agencies use the TAG?

Post-program interviews indicated that participating personnel in the agencies read the TAG and found it informative at the start of their efforts, but they rarely used it after an initial reading. Monthly (sometimes bi-monthly) summary reports provided to agency contacts did more for motivating and assisting agencies with unfamiliar program elements, namely sustaining occupant protection publicity.

Did law enforcement agencies/officers show any more, less, or the same motivation toward non-usage over time?

Participating LEAs provided citation data that indicated agencies/officers in both locations were willing to focus *more* attention on citing non-compliance with the seat belt law in most program months. The evaluation was less helpful for determining whether officers in the field were motivated by overtime pay (alone) or other factors.

LEAs experienced barriers to sustaining messaging and outreach in both demonstration locations. This was particularly the case with community outreach. In Rapides Parish, COVID-19 and hurricanes were immediately problematic. The pandemic and the extreme weather not only provided fewer avenues for program outreach but also reduced the availability of officers to interact with the community. Bingham County efforts were also affected by COVID-19. Efforts put forth in Bingham County indicated smaller agencies serving “thinly populated” rural areas are not likely staffed with expertise to effectively sustain a messaging campaign. This was true even when given a TAG and availability of routine support. Future program efforts must consider the capability of enforcement agencies to staff, prioritize, and sustain publicity where there is heightened motivation to address non-usage is present.

Did the observational surveys that law enforcement agencies conducted motivate officers to do more?

The LEAs often collected observational data in a less-than-ideal manner leading to less useful data and results. This can create confusion when communicating results. PRG provided in-person training and written instructions at the start of the program effort in hopes of achieving tighter control over the quality of data collection. Turnover in staffing, however, contributed to irregular data collection and results. That said, program publicity still used the observational survey results to point out that low belt use remained a problem in the area.

The APD program contact suggested that the observations worked well to motivate traffic patrol officers, as it reminded them that the problem was still not fixed. The project’s main point-of-contact in Bingham County, though, believed the surveys did not work well to motivate officers because officers routinely see (with or without a survey) the exact same people over and over still not wearing belts. This contact believed that these non-users are unmotivated to change because of the low fine amount (\$10). Law enforcement agencies wanting to use observational surveys should do them with consistency in mind to maximize use (e.g., tracking, publicity) over time. Other factors (e.g., low fine amount, resistant population) may play a role that diminish observational survey influence on officer motivation.

Did seat belt usage improve over time?

PRG conducted pre-, mid- and post-waves of scientific roadside seat belt observations. These were conducted in program areas (and control areas) to assess the impact of the program on seat belt usage. Results from the surveys were mixed. Survey results provided no indication that the

program affected seat belt use in Bingham County. Rapides Parish showed some encouraging results. Analyses indicated significant interactions in seat belt usage between program and control locations (i.e., seat belt use rose more in the program area relative to the change in the control area). These results were strongest among women drivers, drivers in the 35-to-59 age group, and drivers on non-city roads. The gains in seat belt use in Rapides Parish were sometimes small, but often paired with a decrease in Ouachita Parish (the control site). Thus, the fact that belt use increased/stayed stable in the program location while decreasing in the control location is encouraging.

Participating agency opinion on replication

Post-program debriefings with local agency representatives found them confident that the program could be successful if carried out in more normal circumstances and that it should, in their opinion, be replicated.

Appendix A: Focus Groups

A1. Moderator’s Guide for Focus Group With Community Members

I. Introduction and Explanation

A. Moderator - _____

This collection of information is voluntary and will be used for formative purposes only in order to develop an educational, enforcement, and communications program designed to increase seat belt use in a rural community and reduce the number of unrestrained traffic-related injuries and deaths. Public reporting burden is estimated to average 90 minutes, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. We will not collect any personal information that would allow anyone to identify you. Please note that a federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB control number. The OMB generic control number for this collection is 2127-0682.

B. Informed Consent

1. Title: Seat Belt Use in Rural Communities Focus Group
2. This project is funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration or “NHTSA.” We, Preusser Research Group, Inc. or “PRG,” are contracted with the NHTSA to collect local data on driver knowledge, attitude, behavior and beliefs regarding traffic safety issues—particularly seat belts. NHTSA wants to know how they can reduce unrestrained traffic fatalities, injuries, and crashes. We have decided to conduct focus groups in different rural communities to get this information.
3. Your participation in this project is voluntary – you can quit at any time.
4. We are simply going to have a discussion. We want to know what you think about a couple of traffic safety issues. This should take approximately 90 minutes of your time.
5. Snacks/Lunch has been provided as a token of our appreciation. Thanks for participating in this project. Again – your participation today is greatly appreciated – as today’s discussion will be very useful for the United States Department of Transportation (U.S.DOT) in addressing traffic safety, specifically seat belt use, in your community and others.
6. The information collected here today is completely confidential. Your identities and responses are confidential.
7. Lastly, you should feel free to contact me or NHTSA with any questions you have about this project.

C. Goal & Scope

Focus group explanation - A focus group is a discussion with a group of people referring to a specific topic. The discussion is led by a group facilitator who

introduces the discussion topics and assists the group in moving forward with discussion. The basics of today's focus group:

1. We are interested in what you think.
2. This is a research project. There is no hidden agenda – we simply want to know about your viewpoints.
3. You should feel free to discuss things among each other. You do not need to address me only.
4. Everyone can talk – you don't need to raise your hand. Please try to talk in an orderly manner without interrupting.
5. There are no right or wrong answers.
6. Please be honest and know it is ok to have an opinion that is different from the majority.
7. We are interested in hearing what all of you have to say. Do not be shy!
8. Are there any questions before we begin?

II. Discussion Guide

A. Community

1. Tell us about your community? What makes it special, different, unique concerns?
2. What do folks do for a living?
3. What do folks do to socialize? (Explore: Fairs, Sports, Bars, etc.)
4. What is the relationship with police?
5. What organization or agency do you trust to help you in a time of need?
6. Any special political situation? (Explore: Scandals, Excitement, etc.)
7. Probe economic situation

B. General Seat Belt Use

1. How do you think people in your community regard seat belts? Do they generally wear them? (Explore: age, gender, economics, rural/urban, etc.)
2. Do you think the seat belt is effective at reducing injury and death in a car? Why or why not?
3. Are there situations where you or people in your community are more likely or less likely to wear seat belts? (Explore: distance, time of day, with kids, out of State, rural roads, speed, community specific scenarios, rural versus urban, etc.)
4. When people in the community don't wear their seat belts, what are the impacts (if any) to the community? (Explore: costs, loss of work, using community resources)
5. Why do you think people in this community choose to wear or not wear their seat belt? (Explore: health, safety, costs, children, habits, forgetfulness, annoying, not worth it, etc.) (If not answered earlier)
6. Do you require other passengers in your car to use seat belts? (Probe: Are there other factors that influence your decision whether or not to require other passengers in your car to use seat belts? Front seat vs. back seat? Age of the passenger? Setting? Distance? Other?)

7. Do you think people make certain judgements about individuals who wear or don't wear their seat belts? (What are those judgments). (Probe if respondents are confused by the question: Are non-seat belt users stigmatized or looked down on in any way? Or is not using a seat belt considered a normal, acceptable form of behavior?) How might your community differ from other communities in this regard? Do you think cities would be different than a rural area?
8. Is there anything about the nature of this community specifically that affects seat belt usage?
9. Is there someone who might influence your seat belt use? (Explore: someone in this community, someone who could encourage non-use.) In the event that participants focus their comments strictly about personal relationships, probe: Apart from your family members and friends, are there other people in your community (for example, public officials, local celebrities, other community leaders, a particular organization or agency) who could encourage you and other people in your community to use their seat belt?
10. What are the potential downsides if you do not wear a seat belt? (Explore: risk of death or injury to oneself, risk of death or injury to other passengers, impact of injury or death on the family, financial costs to both the individual and the community, loss of work, using community resources, etc.)
11. Are there any broader societal costs for not wearing a seat belt?
12. Which of the following is most persuasive to you in considering whether or not to use a seat belt:
 - Risk of your own injury or death?
 - The impact of your injury or death on your family/friends?
 - Risk of a loved one's injury or death?
 - Risk of being ticketed?
 - Personal financial costs (fines, medical expenses, loss of work following an injury)?
 - Costs to the community?
 - Anything else?

C. Seat Belt Use Messaging

Now, we're going to shift gears and talk about how public activities (such as advertisements, public service announcements, information about enforcement policies, etc.) might be used to educate people about the importance of seat belt use and to motivate them to use their seat belts. As we did in our earlier discussion, let's focus our attention specifically on what you think would or wouldn't be effective in your own community.

1. Have you heard or seen any advertisements from the DOT or other organizations regarding use of seat belts? What? Where? (Examples: *Click It or Ticket*, *Buckle Up in Your Truck*, etc.)
2. Do you think these advertisements are effective? What would you change? What makes them effective or not?
3. There are economic costs to society when fatal or injury crashes occur. ***Keeping in mind that seat belts are proven to prevent (or reduce the risk of) serious injuries and/or fatalities in a crash***, we would like you to share your thoughts on

whether the following statistics would affect your attitudes regarding seat belt use:

- You lose an average of 96 days of work when you're involved in a vehicle crash and you're not wearing a seat belt. If you're wearing a seat belt, you lose an average of 10 days.
- One study found that because of non-seat belt use, *every driver* pays about \$51 extra in taxes and insurance premiums to help cover the health-care costs of injured, unbelted occupants.
- Police spend less time investigating non-injury crashes than injury crashes. Seat belt use reduces injuries therefore freeing up law enforcement's time for other priorities and saves money on overtime costs.
- The distributed cost of fatal and injury crashes in the U.S. costs *each person* \$784 annually. (How many people are in your family? How much does this cost your family?)

(Probe: Do any of these costs resonate with you? Do you think they could convince others to wear their seat belt? How might a person's level of health insurance (underinsured or no insurance) impact attitude regarding these items? How do you think each of the previous statements would influence seat belt use in your community if disseminated?)

4. What is the best way to reach people in your community with information about seat belts? (Explore: social media, tv, radio, road signs, checkpoints).
5. If you had to, how would you make your friends and family wear their seat belts?
6. How familiar are you with the State seat belt law? (Explore: fine, law type – primary, secondary, etc.) (Probe: For those of you who were already familiar with the law in your State, has knowing this influenced your seat belt use? For those who were not already familiar with the law, do you think that knowing your State's law will influence your seat belt use in the future?)
7. Has anything or anyone ever convinced you to change your personal seat belt use habits? If so, what/who convinced you to change your habits? Were you convinced to start or stop wearing a seat belt?
8. Have you (or anyone you know) ever gotten a ticket/warning for not wearing a seat belt? (Probe: For those of you who have been ticketed in the past, did receiving a ticket affect your seat belt usage? For those of you who haven't been ticketed, does the knowledge that you might be ticketed influence your seat belt usage?)
9. Does your employer/organization encourage people to wear their seat belt? How? (Explore: seat belt policy) (Probe: For those of you who answered yes, how has this influenced the seat belt usage of you and your fellow employees?)

III. Closing Remarks/Thanks

We have had a good discussion. I am going to wrap up the discussion – is there anything additional anyone would like to end with? Thank you.

A2. A Report of the Findings From Focus Group Interviews With Citizens of Bingham County, Idaho

Conducted by the Preusser Research Group on Behalf of the National Traffic Highway Safety Administration, September 2, 2020.

I. Background

The National Traffic Highway Safety Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation is currently working with local law enforcement departments in select rural communities to develop integrated programs of messaging, public education, and law enforcement policy to reduce the incidence of traffic-related death and serious injury by increasing residents' awareness of and compliance with State seat belt regulations.

II. Objectives and Methodology

As a part of this effort, the Preusser Research Group was hired by NTHSA to design and conduct qualitative research with a representative sample of local residents in the rural community of Blackfoot, Idaho, and the surrounding Bingham County. The objectives of the qualitative research study were to examine and provide actionable insights into the following factors that inform residents' attitudes toward and use of seat belts:

- Participant understanding of and attitudes toward the community in which they live (e.g., primary sources of employment, social activities, attitudes toward law enforcement and other local authorities, the current political and economic situation, etc.), with particular attention to the potential impact of community life on residents' understanding of and response to future public messages, law enforcement initiatives, etc. related to seat belt compliance;
- Participant attitudes toward and use of seat belts, including the key factors that inform participant knowledge of and compliance (or non-compliance) with existing seat belt regulations;
- The perceived benefits of seat belt use;
- Participant assessments of the most persuasive messages for encouraging seat belt use among residents in their community;
- Trustworthy spokespeople for communicating messages regarding current seat belt regulations and the benefits of seat belt use to local residents;
- Optimal media platforms/activities for disseminating public messages about seat belt regulations and the benefits of seat belt use.

Qualitative research for the study consisted of 3 focus group interviews, which were conducted over a 3-day period and involved 23 people. Focus group participants were randomly recruited by PRG at intercept points outside of local businesses. As an incentive for participating, each participant was provided with a \$50 gift card for use at local businesses and a complementary meal at the local restaurant where the focus group was conducted.

The focus group interviews were conducted on August 20 to 22, 2020, at two popular local restaurants in Blackfoot. The focus group discussions lasted from 75 to 90 minutes.

Following is the breakdown of dates, times, and numbers of participants for the 3 focus groups.

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| August 20, 7 p.m. | 9 participants |
| August 21, noon. | 5 participants |
| August 22, 8 a.m. | 9 participants |

All participants were thoroughly briefed regarding the purpose of the research and assured of complete confidentiality and anonymity in the reporting of findings to the client.

III. Findings

Following is a report of the major findings from the qualitative research study.

A. The Community

As part of the research, participants were led in open-ended discussions of the community of Blackfoot and Bingham County, including the primary sources of employment for local residents; preferred forms of entertainment, recreation, and social activity; the quality of residents' relationship with law enforcement officials and other local authorities; and the current political and economic situation within the community.

1. A Community of Farmers

Participants in all the groups identified agriculture (broadly defined as farming, produce sales and transport, and other businesses and people providing services to the agricultural industry) as the primary source of employment for people in Blackfoot and Bingham County, as well as the primary influence on the community's social identity and collective values.

"We're a community of farmers. That's who we are and how we see ourselves."

"Potatoes! Most everyone around here has something to do with potato farming."

Participants reported that the predominance of agriculture has affected their experiences on the local roadways and interstates in a variety of ways, particularly during harvest season, including:

- The number of produce-delivery trucks (often traveling at high speeds) that crowd the highways and increase the risk of accidents;
- The tendency of trucks, tractors, and other farm vehicles to brake with little or no advance notice at rural turnoffs; and,
- The reluctance of farm workers to use their seat belts when traveling short distances on the highway or performing tasks that require frequent stops and departures from their vehicles.

Other sources of employment identified by participants included:

- Health care;
- Education;
- Retail sales (the local Walmart, etc.);
- Construction;
- Forestry (the Idaho Forestry Service); and,
- Science and energy (the nearby Idaho National Laboratory, which is a major source of employment for residents throughout southeastern Idaho).

2. A Stable Economy

The majority of participants described the current economy as relatively stable. While employees in numerous local businesses were furloughed or faced reduced incomes for “a couple of months” during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, participants reported that most community residents have now returned to their former jobs and that “business is back to normal.”

“People are busy again, and everything’s pretty much like it was before.”

“Things were bad for some people back in March, but it’s been much better for a while now.”

All participants agreed that the economic situation in the community prior to the pandemic was stable, with the vast majority of residents able to secure and maintain employment. Participants regarded themselves and their fellow community members as hardworking and generally satisfied with their work.

3. An Emphasis on Family-based Activities, Recreation, and Entertainment

Participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the range of opportunities for both outdoor activities and community-based social activities available to local residents. In describing the types of activities in which they routinely engage, participants repeatedly emphasized their preference for recreation, entertainment, and other social activities that include the entire family.

a. Outdoor Activities

Participants described a variety of outdoor activities in which they regularly participate, including:

- Camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, and sightseeing in the nearby national parks; and,
- Swimming, hiking, and informal gatherings in the local parks within the city.

Several participants cited the close proximity of Blackfoot and Bingham County to an abundance of national parks and protected wilderness areas as the most appealing aspect of living in the community.

“That’s really why I’m here – all the natural beauty and all the things that I’m able to do outdoors.”

b. Family-oriented Entertainment and Social Activities

Participants in all of the groups stressed the importance of “family-oriented” entertainment and social activities in their lives.

“We’re a community of families, and we tend to do the things we do together as families. That’s a big part of who we are.”

Following are the family-oriented entertainment, recreational, and social activities most frequently identified by participants:

- Community theater (including a recent production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*);
- The Blackfoot Arts Center;
- The local movie theaters;
- Karaoke;

- Bowling; and,
- Church attendance and other church-sponsored activities.

Participants in all of the groups emphasized the importance of church attendance and other church-sponsored activities in the life of the community.

“Church is a big deal here.”
“Just about everyone I know goes to church.”

Participants reported that local residents look to their ministers as leaders in the community and sources of moral authority. Several participants recommended local churches and church leaders as a “trusted messenger” to provide community members with information about the importance of seat-belt usage.

c. The Eastern Idaho State Fair

Participants reported that the annual Eastern Idaho State Fair is the most popular and important social event in the life of the community. The State Fair was described as a highly anticipated event that brings the entire population together and celebrates all areas of community life (agriculture, arts and crafts, rodeo, music, and regional cuisine).

“That’s really the highlight of the year around here.”

“It’s something that everyone looks forward to.”

Participants noted with disappointment that the State Fair, which lasts for 10 days and traditionally begins during the first week of September, has been cancelled for 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the majority of participants were reluctant to report any level of discord in the local politics or public life of Blackfoot, a few participants acknowledged that the recent decision by the town’s mayor to cancel the event was a controversial and divisive decision within the community.

“The people who are responsible for the Fair submitted a safety plan to the city, but the mayor decided that it wasn’t safe enough. A lot of people were angry about that.”

“It’s something that we’re all disappointed about.”

Participants agreed that under normal conditions the State Fair would be the optimal setting for introducing information and messages about seat belt use and other highway safety concerns to the public at large.

“It’s the one big event of the year that literally brings everyone together.”

4. Positive Relationship to Local Enforcement

Participants expressed unanimous respect for and support of local law enforcement and other emergency and essential service providers (EMTs, firefighters, hospital personnel). Local police officers were described as “friendly,” “helpful,” “respectful,” and “aggressive but fair” in enforcing speed limit laws and other road safety regulations.

“I think the general feeling is that they’re on our side.”

“It’s saddened me to see how the police are being talked about in other parts of the country right now. That’s definitely not the way we view things here. We have a really good relationship with our police officers.”

Several participants reported having received “warnings,” instead of tickets in the past, after having been pulled over for speeding, failure to signal, or other infractions (including seat belt non-use as an accompanying “secondary” infraction). Participants described the police officers who stopped them as genuinely concerned about their welfare, emphasizing the role of seat belt and other traffic laws in increasing their safety on the roadways. All of the participants who acknowledged having received warnings or tickets in the past reported that the experience was highly effective in changing their future behavior.

“You’re much more likely to get a warning if you get stopped for the first time here. And they take the time to talk with you about why it’s important for you to observe the law.”

“It’s made me think more about what I’m doing every time I get into the car.”

Most participants regarded local law enforcement as the “ideal messenger” for sharing information about seat belt regulations, the benefits of seat belt use, and the negative impact of non-seat belt use.

“They’re the ones who are out there every day and have seen the terrible things that can happen when people don’t use their seat belts.”

B. Seat Belts – Attitudes, Influences, and Behavior

Participants were also asked to discuss their attitudes toward and use of seat belts, including the various factors (knowledge of current State law, personal experiences, advice and recommendations from family and friends, etc.) that inform their attitudes toward and use of seat belts.

1. High Levels of Compliance Among All Respondents

Virtually all respondents indicated that they regularly use their seat belts, and the majority of participants in all the groups reported what they perceived to be a high level of seat belt compliance among drivers throughout the community. Participants described themselves and the majority of their fellow residents as habitual seat belt users.

“I don’t know personally know anyone who doesn’t use their seat belt.”

“Yes, I’d say that almost everyone wears their seat belt.”

Several respondents noted that the drivers they have observed on the interstate are less likely to wear their seat belts than are drivers in their own community.

“Things are much different once you get out on the interstate with all the people just driving through. I’d guess that it’s more like 50-50 there.”

2. Safety as the Primary Motivation for Seat Belt Use

The majority of participants reported that personal safety is the single most important factor in their decision to use their seat belts. All participants agreed that seat belts are effective in reducing the likelihood of serious injury or death during a vehicular crash. Participants identified

the following factors that have informed their belief that seat belts are effective in enhancing the safety of those who wear them.

- *“Horror stories”* – Several participants in each group acknowledged the influence on their own attitudes and behavior of “horror stories” about injuries and fatalities to drivers and/or passengers who were not using their seat belts. While most of these experiences were shared with the participants on a secondhand basis (by police, EMTs, health care workers, friends, etc.), a few participants reported having witnessed seat-belt related injuries and fatalities themselves on the highways and interstates outside the city.

“I lost two of my family members who weren’t wearing their seat belts.”

“I’ve heard so many stories about terrible scenes on the roadside where people weren’t using their seat belts. I can tell you that the police and EMTs who have witnessed these things don’t have any doubts about whether it’s important to wear your seat belt.”

- *Positive experiences* – A few participants described how firsthand experiences of either being saved themselves or seeing their loved ones saved from serious injury by seat belts has contributed to their recognition of the importance and benefits of seat belt use.

“My seat belt saved my life.”

“I was driving down the highway when the door suddenly flew open. My daughter would have fallen out of the car if she hadn’t been wearing her seat belt.”

- Although a few participants indicated that they were concerned about the possibility of being injured or trapped in a vehicle because of wearing a seat belt, even those participants expressing these concerns reported that the benefits of seat belts in increasing safety far outweighed any potential risks associated with seat belt use.

“I’ve heard so many stories over the years. There’s no question in my mind that seat belts can be the difference between life and death.”

- *The influence of family members* – Several participants reported that their decision to use their seat belts has been influenced in the past by the requirements or recommendations of family members who were concerned about their safety.

“It’s something I was taught by my father as far back as I can remember. I can’t ever remember a time when I didn’t wear my seat belt.”

“I’m embarrassed to admit it, but in my case, it was my granddaughters who reminded me of how important it was to wear my seat belt.”

3. Other Factors Influencing Seat Belt Use

In addition to concerns about their own safety and the safety of their loved ones, participants also identified a variety of other factors that have influenced their decisions to use their seat belts. The majority of participants reported that, in most cases, these other factors have “reinforced” or “reminded” them of their previous commitment to use their seat belts – and have not been directly responsible for changing their attitudes and behavior.

- *Automatic seat belt alerts* – Participants reported the effectiveness of the automatic seat belt alerts in their vehicles for reminding drivers who are already committed to wearing seat belts to buckle up each time they start up their car. For most participants, however, seat belt alerts are not viewed as a sufficient motivation for using one’s seat belts, since the signal can be easily disabled. Several participants acknowledged in the past having used various tactics (e.g., buckling the seat belts behind them) to disable the alerts. In each case, the decision to begin using seat belts was based on safety concerns – and not in response to the annoying alert.

“I used to fasten it behind my back just to get the darned thing to stop beeping.”

- *Concerns about local traffic* – Several participants described the impact of local traffic patterns (particularly on the nearby interstate) as heightening their concern about safety and their commitment to using their seat belts. Specific concerns identified by participants included: the number of trucks on the highway and the frequency of sudden stops by farm vehicles during the harvest season; the high-speed levels (an 80-mph speed limit on the interstate that is frequently exceeded by many drivers); and the increased amount of aggressive driving, rapid lane changes, and tailgating by many interstate drivers.

“I think it’s gotten much worse lately. Sometimes you feel like you’re taking your life into your own hands when you drive on the interstate.”

“During harvesting, there can be so many more trucks on the highway. You’re much more aware that something could happen.”

- *Maturity/parenthood* – A few participants also noted the influence of developmental factors (growing older, increased financial responsibilities, having children) in their decision to use their seat belts.

“When you’re young, you don’t really think anything bad can happen to you. But that really begins to change when you get older and have children of your own.”

“The first thing I think of whenever I get in my car is my children. What if something were to happen to them? Or what if something were to happen to me so that I can’t take care of them?”

- *Impact of having been stopped or ticketed in the past* – As has already been noted, several participants also acknowledged that their past experiences of having been stopped and/or ticketed by police have positively influenced their seat belt use. In each case, however, participants (the majority of whom were issued a warning instead of a ticket) insisted that the police action was effective because it reminded them of the importance of wearing their seat belts – and not because they feared being ticketed or fined.
- *Current seat belt laws* – None of the participants were aware of the current fines (\$10 for an initial infraction) for not using one’s seat belt and only a few were aware that non-use penalties can only be imposed as a secondary infraction (after the driver has been stopped for some other primary infraction, such as speeding or failure to use one’s blinker). When informed of the current law, none of the participants indicated that it would have any effect on their future decisions to use or not use their seat belts.

“I mean, \$10? I don’t think that’s going to frighten anyone. And they can’t even pull you over unless you’re doing something else wrong.”

- *The context* – While a few of the participants insisted that they always wear their seat belt, regardless of the situation, the majority of participants in each group acknowledged that they are less likely to wear their seat belts when they are driving off of the main roadway (e.g., in parking lots, on rural backroads, or on private property), when they are traveling at low speeds, or when they are only traveling a short distance. Participants who identified personal safety – and not observance of the law or fear of being ticketed – as their primary motivation for using seat belts, reasoned that there is little danger of being seriously injured in these types of settings and consequently do not regard these types of exceptions as inconsistent with their basic commitment to seat belt use.

“If I’m only going a few blocks and driving slowly, I don’t really see the need.”

“I don’t normally use them if I’m just driving on my own property, but I always do buckle up before I pull out on the road.”

4. Seat Belts and Other Passengers

The majority of participants reported that they either require or encourage other passengers to use their seat belts. Participants reported that in most cases their fellow passengers are already seat belt users and that there has been no need to require or request seat belt use. When such requirements are necessary, however, participants reported that those to whom the requests have been made are generally compliant.

“No one gets in my car without wearing their seat belt.”

“It’s not really that big of an issue, since almost everyone I know already uses their seat belt anyway.”

The majority of participants were aware of current regulations requiring the use of seat belts by passengers in the back seat who are 18 or younger. However, the lack of a regulation requiring mandatory seat belt use for older back seat passengers did not appear to diminish their insistence that all passengers use their seat belts.

5. Impact of Company Policies on Seat Belt Compliance

Several participants in each group reported working or having worked in the past for companies or businesses that require seat belt compliance by employees using company vehicles or driving during work hours. All participants indicated that they were already committed seat belt users prior to their exposure to company policies requiring or encouraging seat belt use. However, participants did acknowledge the effectiveness of these policies for seat belt compliance on a staff-wide level, particularly among younger coworkers.

“Where I work, you don’t drive a company vehicle without using your seat belt. I think it’s a great policy and that it’s been a positive influence on many of the people who work there.”

“I really think it’s a good idea, especially for younger drivers who may not yet appreciate the importance of wearing their seat belts.”

6. Judgments and Stereotypes

When asked directly, participants reported no awareness of negative judgments or stigmas associated with seat belt use or non-use in their community. In spite of their unwillingness to acknowledge their negative attitudes toward non-users in response to direct questioning, however, the comments of several participants in each of the focus groups revealed a number of strongly held negative stereotypes toward community members and interstate drivers who do not wear seat belts, who were variously described as “selfish,” “stubborn,” “irresponsible,” and “unteachable.”

“They’ve already made up their minds and are just set in their ways. None of these messages will have any impact on them whatsoever.”

“What it comes down to is that there are people who care about safety and who will listen to reason, and then there are those who don’t and won’t.”

The general consensus among participants was that current non-users can only be persuaded by a combination of steeper fines for non-use and more aggressive law enforcement, both of which were supported for this reason by many of the participants.

“No, I wouldn’t mind if all the police started pulling people over and ticketing them for not using their seat belts. In my opinion, that’s the only thing that’s going to get some of these people to take this seriously.”

“Stronger law enforcement. If you ask me, that’s the only way to get some people to do the right thing.”

C. Messages

Finally, participants were asked to discuss messages related to seat belt usage, including their level of awareness of recent seat belt-related public service announcements and information campaigns, their assessments of specific messages depicting the cost of non-seat belt compliance to both people and the broader community, and their identification of the most appropriate spokespeople and optimal media for disseminating messages encouraging seat belt use.

1. Public Service Messages

All of the respondents reported at least some level of awareness of past public service announcements and other public messages and/or imagery about seat belt usage and legislation, including: *Click it, or Ticket*, *Seat Belts Save Lives*, *Crash Test Dummies*, and *Buckle Up for Safety*.

“‘Click it, or ticket!’ That’s exactly what you need. A message that’s clear, to the point, and easy to remember.”

“The message I remember the most was the Buckle up for safety song from when I was much younger. That’s really stayed with me.”

Several respondents expressed the belief that the public-service messages that they had heard in the past, while memorable and appealing, were only effective in reinforcing their previous commitments to seat-belt use – and not a contributing factor to their original decision to use their seat belts.

“I don’t think a message like that is actually going to convince anyone to use their seat belt if they’ve already made up their mind one way or another. But it’s always a good reminder to see something like Seat Belts Save Lives up on a billboard or hear it on the radio.”

A few respondents disagreed, suggesting that the types of appealing, ubiquitous messages to which they had been exposed in the past might potentially influence the attitudes and behaviors of younger drivers who haven’t yet decided about whether or not to use their seat belts.

“It’s hard to say what convinced me to wear my seat belt when I was young, but that Buckle Up for Safety message definitely played a role at some point.”

2. Messages about Personal and Family Safety

As part of the discussions, participants were asked to select the most persuasive message or messages among a prepared list of messages describing the potential costs/risks that may result from not wearing seat belts. Following is the list of messages from which participants were asked to select:

- a. Risk of your own injury or death;
 - b. The impact of your injury or death on your family/friends;
 - c. Risk of a loved one’s injury or death;
 - d. Risk of being ticketed;
 - e. Personal financial costs;
 - f. Costs to the community.
- *Safety concerns* – Almost all of the participants were highly responsive to some combination of the first three messages (risk of your own injury or death; the impact of your injury or death on your family/friends; risk of loved one’s injury or death). Participants explained that the most persuasive motivator was their concern for their family members and other loved ones – both the direct risk of non-seat belt use to the lives and well-being of family members and the indirect harm to one’s family that would result from one’s own serious injury or death.

“That’s your message right there. Not using your seat belt can have a devastating effect on your own life and the life of your family.”

“I want to be here for my loved ones. It’s not just about me; it’s about what would happen to them if something should happen to me. That’s definitely the most persuasive reason for me.”

- *Financial concerns* – Several participants acknowledged that they are also concerned about the potential financial costs that could result from not wearing seat belts (medical costs, loss of income/inability to work, increased insurance premiums) but that these concerns were of secondary importance, compared to their greater concerns about the risk of serious injury or death to themselves or their families.
- *Fear of being ticketed* – Participants were largely indifferent to the risk of being ticketed for non-seat belt use. As has already been discussed, participants’ attitudes are informed by their identification of safety (rather conformity to law) as their primary motivation for seat belt use and by the lack of emphasis on seat belt use (\$10 fine, secondary infraction) in State and local seat belt laws and enforcement policies.
- *Costs to the community* – Participants were confused by and unable to discuss “costs to the community” as a persuasive message in encouraging seat belt use. Prior to being

provided in a later question with specific messages about the costs of non-seat belt use to the community (see below), none of the participants in any of the groups expressed any level of awareness of or interest in the cost of non-seat belt compliance to the broader community – either in the open-ended discussions of the costs/risks of not using seat belts or when questioned directly about the potential costs to the community when individual residents are injured or killed while not wearing their seat belts.

“I don’t understand what you mean by costs to the community.”

“This is about safety, right? I’m not sure where the community would fit in.”

3. Messages about Costs to the Community

As described above, participants exhibited no spontaneous awareness of or concern about the social costs of not using their seat belts. However, when presented with a list of prepared messages describing the financial and other costs to the broader community resulting from non-seat belt use, the majority of participants exhibited genuine interest in and concern about several of the potential social and public financial costs resulting from non-seat belt use.

Following is the list of prepared messages from which participants were asked to select.

- a. You lost an average of 96 days of work when you’re involved in a vehicle crash and you’re not wearing a seat belt. If you’re wearing a seat belt, you lose an average of 10 days.
 - b. One study found that because of non-seat belt use, every driver pays about \$51 extra in taxes and insurance premiums to help cover the health-care costs of injured, unbelted drivers.
 - c. Police spend less time investigating non-injury crashes than injury crashes. Seat belt use reduces injuries therefore freeing law enforcement’s time from other priorities and saves money on overtime costs.
 - d. The distributed costs of fatal and injury crashes in the U.S. costs each person \$784 annually.
- *High level of interest in messages about financial costs and loss of work* – Participants in all groups expressed a high level of interest in messages a, b, and d: the impact of non-seat belt use on lost work time; increased taxation/insurance premiums, and the distributed costs of seat-belt injuries and fatalities on the national level. While many participants insisted that the information about the broader social costs of non-seat belt use would only serve to reinforce their own existing commitment to using their seat belts based on safety concerns, they believed that these messages might be useful in persuading others of the importance of using seat belts.

“Just reading this list made it worth my time to have come to this group.”

“This is something I’d definitely share with my family and friends.”

“I’m still not sure that anything can change their minds, but I bet this will at least be something that they hadn’t thought of before.”

- *Limits to the effectiveness of messages about community impact* – In addition to their positive response to the messages about loss of work and financial impact, participants

identified the following concerns about the potential usefulness of these messages for persuading non-users:

- *Complexity* – A few participants cautioned that messages involving multiple figures regarding lost work days or financial costs are far too complex to be used in many conventional formats (billboards, digital signs, radio ads, etc.), which are better suited for conveying slogans and brief, easy-to-remember messages. Participants believed that, in order to be used effectively, such messages would need to be shared in longer formats (newspaper articles, online blogs, public presentations and moderated discussions). Participants expressed concern that the people who could most benefit from these messages would, in many cases, be the least likely to take the time to read and/or listen to lengthier and more substantive presentation.
- *Need for clarity* – Other participants reported that they were confused by the lack of detail and clarity about the information included in the messages. Participants cautioned that, without greater clarity and more information about the sources for the figures that are presented, many readers/listeners will be understandably skeptical about and resistant to the messages themselves.

“I can just hear them now. What is a distributed cost? How is it determined? How do I know that any of this is true?”

“When it comes to information like this, you have to be able to back it up.”

“You have to face facts. There are just some people who aren’t going to believe any of this no matter how much information you give them.”

- *Limited interest in the impact of non-seat belt use on police activities* – Few participants responded positively to the message about the impact of non-seat belt use on other police activities. As several participants explained, local residents are generally highly satisfied with the level of police activity in the community and would consequently be non-responsive to messages about the drain of seat-belt related police operations on other essential activities.

“We’re a quiet community with a good relationship with our police force and with very little crime. It would be hard to make a case that the police don’t have sufficient time to effectively serve the community.”

“We’re law-abiding people here. I don’t think the police have any problems doing their job.”

4. Trusted Authorities/Spokespeople

Participants identified the following people whom they would trust to act as spokespeople for public messages about the requirements for and benefits of seat belt compliance.

- *Law enforcement officers and other emergency service providers* – As has already been discussed, participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with and respect for the local police force, which was repeatedly described as “friendly,” “respectful,” and concerned

about and devoted to the safety and well-being of local residents. Police officers, along with other emergency service providers, were also described as having extensive knowledge and direct experience of the negative impact of non-seat belt use. For the majority of participants, this combination of knowledge and respect makes local law enforcement officers (along with their counterparts on emergency medical teams and in the health care community) the ideal spokespeople for presenting messages and sharing information about seat belt use on a community-wide basis.

“They’re the ones that really understand how important this is. They’ve seen what can happen to people with their own eyes, and they have stories to tell.”

- *Church leaders* – As has already been discussed, church attendance and other church-sponsored activities play an extremely important role in the lives of local residents, and local church leaders are repeatedly identified by participants as among the most trusted leaders in the community. Several participants suggested that local church leaders be recruited to provide members of their congregations with information about the benefits of seat belt use. While seat belt use would probably not qualify as an appropriate topic for the Sunday sermon, it could easily be included in regular communications to church members (emails, pastoral letters, bulletin inserts, etc.), on church bulletin boards, or on outdoor signs and announcements.

“I think it would be totally okay for people to learn about this at church. When it comes down to it, there’s no one we trust more than our minister.”

- *Personal testimonies of local residents whose lives have been directly affected by seat belt use or non-use* – Participants recommended that messages about the potential benefits of seat belt compliance and/or hazards of non-compliance should be delivered by people whose lives or the lives of their children or other loved ones have actually been affected by wearing their seat belts.

“That’s really what it’s all about – what this has meant in the lives of people just like us.”

- *Celebrities* – Participants expressed little if any interest in having seat-belt related messages presented by local, regional, or national celebrities, even though local and college sports are extremely popular in the community, and several prominent professional athletes (e.g., former San Francisco 49ers standout Jason Hill) have homes in the area.

5. Optimal Media for Disseminating Seat Belt Messages

Participants identified a variety of media platforms and activities that they believed would be useful in sharing messages about the importance and benefits of seat belt use. Most participants believed that a successful media campaign would require the integration of multiple platforms and activities for reaching different segments of the population. Following are the most commonly identified media platforms and activities:

- *In-person presentations* – Participants repeatedly recommended the use of police and other emergency personnel (EMTs, hospital personnel, etc.) to provide substantive, in-person presentations about seat belt use and other highway safety concerns in local

churches, schools, and community organizations. As has already been discussed, local police officers were identified by participants as the ideal messengers for providing the public with information about seat belt use, and in-person presentations and discussions were identified as the optimal setting for providing residents with persuasive information (e.g., the “community impact” messages) not suitable for more traditional media platforms (billboards, digital signs, posters, PSAs on television and radio, etc.).

“If you give the police the opportunity to share their experiences, I think people will listen.”

“To really get some of these ideas [the messages about personal impact and community impact], you’re going to need to give people a lot more information and give them a chance to ask questions.”

- *Coverage in local media* – A few participants suggested the usefulness of local media to provide readers with additional information (e.g., up-to-date information about current seat belt law and enforcement policies; interviews with police officers, medical workers, and local residents with experiences related to seat belt use; etc.).

“I happen to know that the local newspaper would be interested in covering this.”

- *Traditional media platforms* – Participants acknowledged the usefulness of brief, clearly defined messages (slogans, personal testimonies) via traditional media platforms (billboards, television, radio, posters in post offices and other public places, signs at parking lot exits, etc.) for “reinforcing” responsible roadway behavior. Participants do not believe, however, that such media messages are, in and of themselves, effective in persuading people to change their attitudes and behavior.
- *Social media* – Participants in all groups recommended the use of digital social media for reaching younger members of the community.

“Young people today don’t really listen to the radio or watch television the way we did. They get most of their information from social media.”

- *School-based programs* – Participants also stressed the importance of school-based programs (particularly driver’s education classes) for providing information about current seat belt law, the benefits of seat belt use, and the potential negative results of not using one’s seat belt. Several participants reported that the graphic video tapes to which they were exposed in their own high school driver’s education classes, while often focused on aspects of highway safety other than seat belt use (speeding, driving under the influence, etc.) had a profound effect on their own attitude toward responsible roadway behavior.

“I just don’t believe you can get many people to change once they’re already made up their minds about something. But you can influence young people before they’ve begun to develop bad habits. That’s the best time to reach them.”

A3. A Report of the Findings From Focus Group Interviews With Citizens of Alexandria, Louisiana

Conducted by Preusser Research Group on behalf of the National Traffic Highway Safety Institute, December 1, 2019.

I. Background

The National Traffic Highway Safety Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation is currently working with local law enforcement departments in select communities to develop integrated programs of messaging, public education, and law enforcement policy to reduce the incidence of traffic-related death and serious injury by increasing residents' awareness of and compliance with State seat belt regulations.

II. Objectives and Methodology

As a part of this effort, PRG was hired by NTHSA to design and conduct qualitative research with a representative sample of local residents. The objectives of the qualitative research study were to understand the following factors that inform residents' attitudes toward and use of seat belts:

- Participants' understanding of and attitudes toward the community in which they live (e.g., current economic conditions, lifestyle and social activities, attitudes toward law enforcement and other local authorities, etc.), with particular attention to the impact of community life on residents' understanding and response to future public messages, law enforcement initiatives, etc. related to seat belt compliance;
- Participants' attitudes toward and use of seat belts, including the key factors (media campaigns, personal experiences, the influence of others, etc.) that inform participants' knowledge of and compliance (or non-compliance) with existing seat belt regulations;
- The perceived benefits (both personal and social) of seat belt use;
- Existing obstacles to and problems with seat belt use;
- Participants' assessments of the most persuasive messages for encouraging seat belt use;
- Trustworthy spokespeople for communicating messages regarding current seat belt regulations and the benefits of seat belt use;
- Optimal media for disseminating public messages about seat belt regulation and the benefits of seat belt use.

Qualitative research for the study consisted of three (3) focus group interviews, which were conducted over a two-day period and involved a total of eighteen (18) people. Focus group participants were randomly recruited by PRG staff at intercept points outside of local businesses. As an incentive for participating each participant was provided with a \$25 VISA/Mastercard gift card.

The focus group interviews were conducted on November 21 (2 interviews) and November 23 (1 interview) in a standard focus group facility at a local hotel. Each focus group discussion lasted about 90 minutes.

Following is the breakdown of dates, times, and numbers of participants for the 3 focus groups:

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| November 21, 2019 3 p.m. | 5 participants |
| November 21, 2019 6:30 p.m. | 8 participants |
| November 23, 2019 10:30 a.m. | 5 participants |

All participants were thoroughly briefed regarding the purpose of the research and assured of complete confidentiality and anonymity in the reporting of findings to the client.

III. Findings

Following is a report of the major findings from the qualitative research study.

A. The Community

As part of the research, participants were led in an open-ended discussion of the community of Alexandria, including current economic conditions, opportunities for community involvement and other forms of entertainment and social interaction, and the quality of residents' relationship with law enforcement officials and other local authorities.

1. An Area in Decline

Participants described Alexandria and the surrounding area as a community in the midst of an extended period of social disruption and economic decline, with little or no hope of improvement for the foreseeable future. Alexandria's struggling economy and substandard pay scales and employment opportunities emerged as dominant themes throughout the discussions, with participants variously describing the current economy as "*stagnate,*" "*inadequate,*" "*horrible,*" "*terrible,*" "*depressing,*" and "*hopeless.*"

Participants identified the following factors that have contributed to the community's current economic struggles:

- The closing of England Air Force Base 5 miles from Alexandria more than a quarter a century ago, depriving the area of its major employer, facilitator of social and cultural diversity, and primary source of identity;
- The incremental departure of several large locally based industries and businesses in the years following the closing of the air force facility, further reducing opportunities for stable, suitably remunerative employment for the area's residents;
- Louisiana's substandard minimum wage legislation, which has left a growing number of local residents at the mercy of Wal-Mart and other minimum-wage employers;
- The inadequate salary scales provided by schools, social services, and other public institutions (with participants providing examples of a full-time cafeteria workers earning \$13,000 a year and a full-time elementary school teacher retiring after 20 years with a \$20,000 a year salary, compared to \$38,000 for the same position in Baton Rouge). (It should be noted that participants' perceptions are consistent with recent consensus data, which report the average individual income in Alexandria as \$20,149 (compared to a national average of \$28,555), with the community's projected job growth over the next 10 years as 17% (compared to 33.5% growth nationwide);
- Perceptions of a growing and conspicuous income inequality, in which a small minority of residents live in enormous homes in gated communities while most working-class residents struggle from one paycheck to the next;
- A history of cynical, self-interested, scandal-ridden State and local political leaders and institutions that are perceived as indifferent and unresponsive to the social and economic residents' needs; and
- Ongoing attrition among the area's young adult population, particularly among college graduates and skilled professionals, who feel compelled to move elsewhere to find suitable employment and social opportunities.

“It’s been like this for as long as I can remember, ever since the air force base shut down. It’s just been one thing after another since then, with things going from bad to worse.”

“I was teaching full time, but I still had to have a second job just to get by. There were times when I was actually working a third job.”

“For a lot of us, it’s a struggle just to survive.”

“So many people living here are just one missed paycheck away from being homeless.”

“People here can’t even afford to go to the doctor when they need to. That’s why there are more than 50 urgent care centers here. It’s all that people can afford.”

“Who are these people and where do they get the half million dollars it takes to buy these houses they live in? They’re definitely not earning the money here.”

“Hell, this is Louisiana. What do you expect? Everything’s a scandal here when it comes to politics. They’re all just looking out for themselves.”

2. A Proud, Tight-Knit Community

In spite of their frustrations with Alexandria’s current economic situation and employment opportunities, participants expressed a high level of pride in and commitment to their community overall and to their individual neighborhoods, which they described as “warm,” “proud,” “hospitable,” and “close-knit.”

Participants identified the following factors that have contributed to the strength and viability of their community in the midst of the current period of social and economic decline:

- A strong sense of individual neighborhood identity and pride, with the emergence of active community groups and experienced community leaders (or “elders”) who work together to solve problems, address local needs, and “get things done.”
- A high level of enthusiasm for and involvement in seasonal parades, balls, and other neighborhood-based and citywide activities (Art Fest, Winter Fest, Pecan Fest, Mardi Gras, Art Walk, Christmas, Easter, Food Truck Fridays, etc.), which attract residents from throughout the community;
- A strong sense of pride in State and local sports (the New Orleans Saints, LSU football and basketball, LSU’s Alexandria campus, which has recently become a 4-year university);
- The recent election of the city’s first African American mayor, about whom both white and African American participants expressed at least some level of optimism and trust.

3. A Strained Relationship With Law Enforcement

Almost all participants reported a strained, mistrustful, generally unproductive relationship between local residents and local law enforcement. Alexandria’s police were described as “arrogant,” “unfair,” “biased,” “overly aggressive,” and “out for themselves.”

“They scare me.”

“They’re out to get us.”

“If you ask me, they’re a bunch of jerks. They could care less about the people here.”

“I would characterize [the relationship between residents and the police] as strained at best.”

Participants identified the following factors that have contributed to the currently strained relations between local residents and the police:

- Perceptions that the police force has responded in an overly aggressive manner to the local drug crisis;
- Perceptions that aggressive police activities are unfairly concentrated on low-income and minority neighborhoods and people. The discussions also revealed widespread agreement among both white and African American participants that there is a far higher likelihood of getting stopped for minor violations and then searched if you're a white person in an African American neighborhood or an African American person in a white neighborhood;
- Perceptions that police sometimes use seat belt violations and other minor infractions as an excuse to conduct searches and engage in more aggressive behavior. Several respondents reported that their cars had been searched when they were pulled over for other, non-drug-related violations;
- Personal observations of police officers in violation of the law (e.g., speeding when not in pursuit, not using seat belts, texting or using cell phones while driving, etc.).

4. Participants Signs of Improvement in the Relationship Between Law Enforcement and the Local Community

Despite their generally negative perceptions of the police, several participants also acknowledged recent attempts by the police department to improve relations between local law enforcement and the community, including:

- The presence of police officers at neighborhood community meetings;
- An increased presence of police in the local parks introducing themselves to and interacting with children and their parents.

Participants who were aware of the recent overtures toward the local community on the part of the police department appeared to be impressed by what they have experienced and eager to improve their relationship with local law enforcement. To date, the activities described by participants have focused strictly on personal relationships, with police officers introducing themselves to and meeting with community members, but several participants suggested that the neighborhood meetings represent an excellent opportunity for police officers to explain and hear residents' responses to and concerns about various aspects of local law enforcement, including seat belt compliance.

"They've been coming into the community more, introducing themselves and speaking at community meetings. I think they're working pretty hard to make things better."

"I do believe they recognize the problem and that they're trying to improve things, and there's a lot of room for improvement."

Participants were divided in their assessments of the correlation between the age of the police officers and their relationship to the community. Some participants described the younger police officers who have recently joined the force as more aggressive and disrespectful than older officers, while others viewed the younger officers as representing the police force's recent attempts at reform and greater responsiveness toward the local community.

B. Seat Belts – Attitudes, Influences, and Behavior

Participants were also asked to discuss their attitudes toward and use of seat belts, including the various factors (knowledge of current State law, personal experiences, etc.) that inform their attitudes toward and use of seat belts.

1. Seat Belt Use

Participants in all the groups reported what they perceived to be a high level of seat belt compliance across the community. The general perception throughout the discussions was that both the individual participants themselves and most of their fellow residents are habitual seat belt users.

“Everybody uses them.”

“It’s just what people do here.”

“I’d say at least 80% of the people on the road are wearing their seat belts.”

2. Factors That Motivate Seat Belt Use

Participants identified a variety of factors that motivate them to use their seat belts, including:

- *“It’s the law!”* – All participants reported at least a general awareness of current State legislation requiring seat belt use. For most participants, the knowledge of current seat belt legislation was not attributed to any particular campaign, political service announcement, or recent police activity – but was described as *“part of the culture here”* or *“just something we all know.”*
- *Fear of ticketing* – According to the vast majority of participants the impact of State legislation on seat belt use is strongly reinforced by the ubiquitous presence of law enforcement vehicles (both local police and the State troopers on the Interstate) on the area’s streets and highways, along with law enforcement’s aggressive approach to law enforcement.

“They’re everywhere, hiding around every corner.”

“You can’t drive two blocks down your own street without worrying about getting pulled over.”

- *Inability to pay fines* – In the current period of economic decline, participants attributed enormous importance on the fear of being faced with a fine that they can’t afford to pay. At least half of the participants identified the loss of income from a fine as the single greatest factor in their own seat belt compliance. Several of the participants were aware of the current \$50 fine for a first seat belt offence, others were unaware that the fine had increased from \$25. Participants also tended to conflate their attitude toward seat belt fines and ticketing practices with their experience/knowledge of the exorbitant costs of speeding tickets and other costly penalties. For the majority of participants, “fear of being ticketed” and “the inability to pay fines” are essentially the same concern. Participants expressed no concern about other negative aspects of being ticketed (social stigma, license suspension, etc.). In the current depressed economy in the area, money (or the fear of losing money that one cannot afford to lose) is the primary motivator for seat belt compliance.

“I don’t know about the rest of you, but I can’t afford to pay a fine on my current salary.”

“We’re already struggling enough as it is without having to deal with this.”

- *Automatic seat belt alerts* – Participants also reported the effectiveness of the automatic seat belt alerts in their vehicles in reminding them to buckle up.

“That ringing will drive you crazy.”

“I bought a new car and it won’t stop dinging until I buckle up. So, I buckle up.”

- *Concerns about local traffic* – Several participants described local traffic congestion and the erratic behavior of many local drivers as reinforcing their reliance on seat belts.

“It’s dangerous to drive around here.”

“People drive weird around here.”

“Everyone’s always in a rush.”

- *Age/parenthood* – A few participants also noted the influence of developmental factors (growing older, increased financial responsibilities, having children) in their decision to use their seat belts. As will be described in the final section of this report, the potentially negative impact of not using seat belts on children and other loved ones was identified by a substantial majority of participants as a compelling message for using seat belts.

“I think it has a lot to do with maturity. When I was young, it wasn’t cool to wear a seat belt, and I didn’t think about the possibility of something happening to me if I didn’t. It’s a lot different now that I’ve gotten older.”

“My daughter is always the first thing and the last thing on my mind. What would happen to her if something were to happen to me?”

- *Habitual behavior* – A few participants had difficulty identifying the specific factors that influence their decision to use their seat belts, describing seat belt compliance as *“just something I do.”*

“I actually feel naked if I’m not wearing my seat belt. It’s the same way I feel if I go without taking my pocketknife.”

- *Impact of having received a ticket in the past* – Surprisingly, the impact of having been ticketed for failing to use seat belts appeared to have little or no impact on participants’ future seat belt compliance. Participants identified the following reasons that their subsequent behavior was not influenced by receiving a ticket for non-seat belt compliance:
 - *The setting in which the ticket was given (driving a few blocks to a friend’s home in a residential neighborhood)* – Participants generally consider the use of seat belts while short distances at minimal speeds in familiar settings as unnecessary and view seat belt enforcement in residential areas (which they describe as a common occurrence in the neighborhoods in which they live) with minimal speed limits as an irritating form of legal harassment that has nothing to do with public safety. Participants reported that they continued to drive short distances in their

own neighborhoods without using their seat belts, even after they received a ticket.

- *The age at which the ticket was received* – Older participants who received tickets when they were young reported that the tickets did not influence their behavior at the time, with aging and maturity identified as a stronger motivator than fear for changing their behavior over time;
- *Strong resistance to being forced to wear seat belts* – Two participants expressed a strong belief that the government does not have the right to force individual residents to use their seat belts – and that having been ticketed actually strengthened their resistance to seat belt compliance.

3. Recognition of the Effectiveness of Seat Belts in Preventing Death or Serious Injury

Noticeably absent from the previous listing is the effectiveness of seat belts in preventing death or serious injury as a motivator for seat belt compliance. Virtually all respondents acknowledged the effectiveness of seat belts in preventing death or serious injury – but only when they were actively directly prompted to speak about the issue. However, safety concerns were more commonly identified as a secondary or tertiary motivator in the earlier, open-ended discussions of factors influencing seat belt compliance – less influential than awareness of the law, fear of being ticketed, inability to pay fines, and the irritating influence of the automatic seat belt alerts in their vehicles.

When asked to discuss the effectiveness of seat belts in preventing death or serious injury, several respondents provided personal anecdotes about people in their own lives who have been saved from death or serious injury when wearing seat belts, as well as people who lost their lives when not wearing seat belts

“I just lost a cousin last month who wasn’t wearing a seat belt.”

“I think we’ve all known somebody who at one time or another was saved by using a seat belt.”

4. Seat Belt Effectiveness and the Welfare of Loved Ones

For many respondents, the effectiveness of seat belts in preventing death or serious injury is most compelling when combined with concerns about the welfare of loved ones – both the potential injury or death of loved ones who are not wearing their own seat belts and (most importantly) the potential costs to children, spouses, and other loved ones if the driver him or herself is killed or seriously injured when not wearing seat belts.

“Every time I get in the car, the first thing I think about is what would happen to my daughter if something were to happen to me. I can’t imagine any stronger incentive than that to use a seat belt.”

“It’s something we don’t think about as much as we should. What would happen to my family if something were to happen to me?”

5. Obstacles to Seat Belt Compliance

While virtually all participants acknowledged the effectiveness of seat belts for preventing serious injury or death, several respondents identified obstacles to or problems with enforced seat belt compliance, including:

- Counter examples (provided by at least two people in each group) about people who suffered injury *because they were* wearing seat belts;

- Dissatisfaction with current seat belt designs – with a few participants describing difficulty using their seat belts because of their size or physical disabilities;
- Concerns about personal freedom – As has already been noted, a small number of participants expressed the conviction that the government does not have the right to impose seat belt compliance on individual residents, who should have the freedom to choose for themselves whether to use seat belts.

“It’s my business whether I wear one or not.”

“If you ask me, I actually believe people would be more inclined to use their seat belts if it wasn’t something that was forced on them.”

6. Seat Belts and Other Passengers

The majority of participants reported that they either require or encourage other passengers to use their seat belts. Several participants expressed the belief that current State law holds drivers legally responsible for the seat belt compliance of other passengers in the vehicle, including passengers in the back seat.

- In spite of their awareness of both the safety concerns and legal issues involved in seat belt use by other passengers in their vehicles, participants expressed frustration that it, in actual practice, it is difficult if not impossible to force other adults to use seat belts against their will.
- Other participants insisted that it should not be their responsibility, as drivers, to enforce seat belt use by others.

“I do try to make other people wear them, but you can’t make somebody do something they don’t want to do.”

“They’re all big boys, and they know the same information that I know.”

7. Seat Belts and Children

Participants were similarly divided in their attitudes toward and compliance with current seat belt requirements for children.

- While all participants acknowledged the potential benefits of securing children in the back seats of their vehicles using appropriate seating devices, several respondents expressed frustration with the costs of children’s safety seats, the difficulty involved in moving children’s seats from one vehicle to another (for those who can’t afford to purchase separate seats for each vehicle), and the designated age range for backseat safety equipment (with several participants insisting that many older children within the designated age range no longer need the special equipment and that use requirements should be based upon size, not age).
- Despite these concerns and objections, however, most participants agreed that children’s safety is a persuasive motivator for using seat belts and safety equipment, regardless of the cost or inconvenience of doing so.

“Look, when I put my child in the car, her safety is my responsibility. I’ll do whatever it takes to keep her safe.”

8. Costs to the Community

None of the participants in any of the groups expressed any level of awareness of or interest in the cost of non-seat belt compliance to the broader community – either in the open-ended discussions of the costs/risks of not using seat belts or when questioned directly about the potential costs to the community when individual residents are injured or killed while not wearing their seat belts. See the *Messaging* section below for a discussion of participants’ assessments of the persuasiveness of prepared messages about the social costs of non-seat belt compliance.

“For me, it’s a personal issue, something that concerns me and my family. I don’t see that it has anything to do with anyone else.”

“Costs to the community? I honestly can’t think of anything.”

9. Impact of Company Policies on Seat Belt Compliance

Only five of the participants reported working or having worked in the past for companies or businesses that require seat belt compliance by employees using company vehicles or driving during work hours. While each of these participants supported and affirmed the effectiveness of these policies for seat belt compliance on a staff-wide level, they also insisted that they were already habitual seat belt users before they were introduced to the policies.

C. Messaging

Finally, participants were asked to discuss messages related to seat belt usage, including their level of awareness of recent seat belt-related public service announcements and information campaigns, their assessments of specific messages depicting the cost of non-seat belt compliance to both people and the broader community, and their identification of the most appropriate spokespeople and optimal media for disseminating messages encouraging seat belt use.

1. Awareness of Past Messages and Information Campaigns

Virtually all participants reported at least some level of awareness of past public service announcements and public messages about seat belt legislation – particularly the recent *Click It or Ticket* campaign, along with the heavy emphasis on seat belt compliance during Seat Belt Awareness Month.

- Most participants had difficulty identifying the specific medium (television, radio, social media, billboards, etc.) through which they were introduced to *Click It or Ticket* and other seat belt-related messages. The consensus was that they had been exposed to seat belt messaging through a variety of media over time.
- While most participants acknowledged that their ongoing exposure to *Click It or Ticket* messages reinforced their awareness of current seat belt regulations, they insisted that their decision to use seat belts and their habitual compliance with seat belt regulations was already in place *before* they were introduced to recent public messages about seat belts.

2. Messages – Costs/Risks of Not Wearing Seat Belts

As part of the discussions, participants were asked to select the most persuasive message among a prepared list of messages describing the potential costs/risks that may result from not wearing seat belts. Following is the list of messages from which participants were asked to select:

- Risk of your own injury or death;
- The impact of your injury or death on your family/friends;
- Risk of a loved one's injury or death;
- Risk of being ticketed;
- Personal financial costs; or
- Costs to the community.

Participants from all groups reacted most strongly to “the impact of your injury or death on your family/friends,” “fear of being ticketed,” and “personal financial costs.” Following is a brief discussion of participants’ reactions, listed according to the frequency with which each message was identified as most persuasive.

- *The potentially negative impact of not using one’s seat belt on one’s loved ones* – By far the most persuasive message was the message about the potentially negative impact of one’s own death or serious injury on one’s loved ones. As has already been described, the persuasiveness of messages connecting seat belt use to their own wellbeing as drivers has been effectively undermined for many participants by their mistrust and resentment of the actions of law enforcement and other public authorities. Simply put, participants *do not* believe that their own safety and wellbeing is the real rationale for current seat belt regulations and enforcement, which they are more likely to attribute to fundraising schemes, enforcement quotas, and the adversarial posture of the police toward low-income and minority residents. In this context, participants’ resentment of and resistance to what they view as harassment and selective, overly aggressive enforcement has resulted in a tendency to assert their own rights at the potential expense of their own safety. This tension between rights and safety *does not* appear to apply, however, when people consider the impact of seat belt use on their children, spouses, and other loved ones, and even the most frustrated and cynical of participants exhibited at least some level of positive response to messages about the potentially negative impact on one’s loved ones.
- *Fear of ticketing/Personal financial costs* – Not surprisingly, given the community’s depressed economy and low wages, fear of ticketing and the personal financial costs involved in being ticketed were also identified as persuasive messages for a large number of participants, with several participants identifying the two combined messages as the second most persuasive message in the list (following the potentially negative impact of one’s own death or serious injury on ones’ loved ones) and a few participants identifying the two combined messages as the most persuasive message in the list. As has already been discussed, most participants tended to conflate “fear of ticketing” and “inability to pay fines” when discussing the factors that motivate them to use their seat belts.

3. Messages – Costs to the Community

As has already been discussed, participants exhibited no spontaneous awareness of or concern about the social costs of not using their seat belts. When presented with a list of prepared messages describing the financial and other costs to the broader community resulting from non-seat belt use, participants had difficulty identifying any messages as compelling or persuasive.

Following is the list of prepared messages from which participants were asked to select:

- You lost an average of 96 days of work when you're involved in a vehicle crash and you're not wearing a seat belt. If you're wearing a seat belt, you lose an average of 10 days.
- One study found that because of non-seat belt use, every driver pays about \$51 extra in taxes and insurance premiums to help cover the health-care costs of injured, unbelted drivers.
- Police spend less time investigating non-injury crashes than injury crashes. Seat belt use reduces injuries therefore freeing law enforcement's time for other priorities and saves money on overtime costs.
- The distributed costs of fatal and injury crashes in the U.S. costs each person \$784 annually.

Following is a brief discussion of participants' reactions, listed according to the frequency with which each message was identified as most persuasive.

- The highest level of response was for the message describing the increased insurance premiums and taxes required to cover the medical costs of people who were injured while not wearing seat belts.
- Not surprisingly, given participants dissatisfaction with local law enforcement and cynicism regarding current law enforcement priorities and policies, participants from all groups expressed disbelief (with a few participants laughing) at the message regarding displacement of more appropriate police activities.
- While a few participants responded positively to the message describing the comparatively higher number of work days lost by people who were not wearing seat belts, the discussions that followed revealed that participants' concerns were about the potential loss of *their own work days* – and not about the loss of productivity for local businesses or the community as a whole.

The discussion of the social costs of non-seat belt compliance also generated spontaneous questions in all the groups regarding how fines from seat belt enforcement are used and what, if any, benefit they contribute to the community.

“Why does it cost so much?”

“Where does all this money go?”

“It's just being taken from us as a money-making scheme and not benefiting the people who live here.”

4. Trusted Authorities/Spokespeople

Participants identified a variety of people – ranging from State and local sports celebrities to everyday people from their own communities – whom they would trust to act as spokespeople for public messages about the requirements and importance of seat belt compliance. As the following list suggests, the usefulness of each individual spokesperson is closely linked to the specific message that he or she would be responsible for delivering.

- *State and local sports heroes* – including New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees, LSU football coach Ed Orgeron, sports standouts at LSU at Alexandria (which recently

became a 4-year university) – People in this group were described as having the greatest benefit in communicating general information about the details of, rationale for, and primary benefits of current seat belt regulations. A few participants also suggested using entertainers from Louisiana (e.g., popular rap singer Lil Wayne, who grew up in New Orleans) as spokespeople for seat belt messages targeted to younger drivers.

- *Personal testimonies of people whose lives have been saved by seat belt use* – Participants recommended that messages about the potential benefits of seat belt compliance should be delivered by people whose lives or the lives of their children or other loved ones have actually been saved by wearing their seat belts. Participants further suggested that, if possible, it would also be useful if the people presenting these personal messages were chosen based on their ability to represent the specific demographic groups (age, race, household income, etc.) toward which the message is targeted.
- *Personal testimonies of loved ones of people whose lives were lost by not using seat belts* – As with the previous group, participants recommended that spokespeople in this group should consist of people with firsthand experience of the situations they are describing and that spokespeople should be selected based on their ability to represent the specific demographic groups toward whom the messages are targeted.
- *Informal community leaders/neighborhood elders* – As has already been discussed, several participants described the importance of informal “neighborhood elders” for educating their communities about available resources and services, legal concerns, etc. and for representing the needs of their communities to local authorities. In this context, informal community leaders were identified as an important conduit for transmitting public messages (including but not limited to seat belt compliance) to local residents in a manner that is aware of and responsive to their concerns.
- *Local political leadership* – As previously discussed, the recently elected mayor of Alexandria, who is the community’s first African American mayor, was described favorably by both white and African American participants and identified by a few participants as a trustworthy spokesperson for delivering information about the details and rationale for current seat belt regulations.
- *Local law enforcement* – Participants repeatedly emphasized their dissatisfaction with and mistrust of local law enforcement and State highway enforcement personnel. In this context, participants demonstrated a strong aversion to the suggestions of public service announcements, billboard messages, etc. featuring local law enforcement officers. However, a few participants did suggest that information about the rationale for and potential benefits of current seat belt regulations might be productively integrated into the recently initiated meetings between informal community groups and representatives of local law enforcement, particularly if such meetings included opportunities for individual residents to voice their concerns about current laws and how they are enforced.

5. Most Effective Medium for Disseminating Seat Belt Messages

Participants were unable to identify a single medium that they believe would be most effective in disseminating seat belt-related messages throughout the community.

- In terms of formal media, most participants recommended a multiplatform information campaign, in which messages provided via television, radio, roadside billboards and digital message screens, social media, and print advertisements complement and reinforce one another.

- Participants from all groups stressed the importance of social media for reaching younger drivers, many of whom have limited exposure to more traditional media (television, radio, print).
- As has already been discussed, several participants stressed the need for informal, face-to-face interactions between residents and local law enforcement. Both the Residents' Academies (sponsored by the local sheriff's office and police department) and the informal neighborhood meetings, some of which have already been attended by local police, as appropriate settings for residents to meet and express their concerns to local law enforcement officers while also receiving updates about seat belt policies and other law enforcement activities.

Appendix B: Technical Assistance Guide (With Appendices A to E)

Developing an Adult Seat Belt Enforcement Program for Rural Areas

A Technical Assistance Guide



Preusser Research Group
February 2020



Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|---|
| AAA | American Automobile Association |
| APD | Alexandria Police Department |
| BCSO | Bingham County Sheriff's Office |
| CDC | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention |
| CenLA | Central Louisiana |
| CIOT | <i>Click It or Ticket</i> |
| DDACTS | Data- Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety |
| FARS | Fatality Analysis Reporting System |
| GHSA | Governors Highway Safety Association |
| HLDI | Highway Loss Data Institute |
| HVE | high-visibility enforcement |
| IACP | International Association of Chiefs of Police |
| IIHS | Insurance Institute of Highway Safety |
| LEA | law enforcement agency |
| LHSC | Louisiana Highway Safety Commission |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NHTSA | National Highway Traffic Safety Administration |
| NOYS | National Organization for Youth Safety |
| NRSF | National Road Safety Foundation |
| NSC | National Safety Council |
| OMB | Office of Management and Budget |
| PIO | public information officer |
| PRG | Preusser Research Group |
| RP method | reference point method |
| SAS | Statistical Analysis System |
| SBO | seat belt observation |
| SHSO | State Highway Safety Office |
| SMO | social media officer |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for Social Sciences |
| TAG | technical assistance guide |
| TSC | transportation safety coordinator |
| U.S.DOT | United States Department of Transportation |

Introduction

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is one of the leaders in the effort to increase seat belt use across America. Many programs focused on decreasing unrestrained injuries and fatalities on America's roads have been developed through partnerships between NHTSA and local law enforcement agencies (LEAs). NHTSA uses data to identify areas where intervention would be helpful and has recently pointed out that rural areas are overrepresented in unrestrained fatalities and exhibit lower seat belt use rates than urban areas. According to the 2013 U.S. Census Bureau Survey, it is estimated that one in five Americans live in rural and frontier areas but disproportionately contribute to the fatality rate, representing more than half of all traffic crash fatalities. In addition, according to the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health, 60% of all trauma deaths in the United States occur in rural areas and the uninsured population in rural areas is nearly a quarter of all rural residents. This leads to rural residents taking on the burden of health care costs, spending more than \$1,000 a year out-of-pocket.

The 2008 NHTSA study, *How States Achieve High Seat Belt Use Rates*, looked at case studies of States who implemented *Click It or Ticket* campaigns. The study found that high visibility seat belt law enforcement, effective planning and implementation of seat belt use programs based on solid data and research, and effective seat belt law enforcement publicity were among key factors associated with States achieving high seat belt use. It also found that although a few geographic, demographic, and cultural factors were associated with lower seat belt use, none were a barrier to high seat belt use. (Hedlund, 2008).

This technical guide is intended as a tool to help your law enforcement agency to plan and implement a comprehensive seat belt enforcement program in your local community. The program hinges on using local data, specifically seat belt observations and health-related data. You will use these elements to build publicity and plan for community engagement, including enforcement compliance.

- the role data plays in building an adult belt enforcement program
- guidelines for conducting a local, non-scientific observational survey of seat belt use
- using data in communications and seat belt enforcement
- ideas for earned media and outreach strategies
- step-by-step instructions for setting up, implementing, and measuring a program.

This technical guide will first introduce the overall steps involved in the program development process and will then provide step-by-step instructions for building an innovative and effective seat belt enforcement program suited for your local community.

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Planning Steps – An Overview

Step 1: Conduct Seat Belt Observations (SBO)

Select 4-5 locations dispersed throughout the community as observation sites. Consider using high crash areas or locations where seat belt enforcement will take place. Choose locations with moderate to high traffic.

Observe belt use for 200-250 vehicles at each location. A total sample of 1,000-1,200 occupants is enough for data analysis.

Compute results. The total seat belt use rate can be figured using a simple formula. In addition, use rates for drivers, passengers, and vehicle type can be computed as well. The worksheet in Appendix B can be used to help figure results.

Repeat. Conduct several rounds/waves of observations. Establish a baseline use rate by observing seat belt use before any enforcement or publicity is conducted. Use the baseline rate as a comparison to gauge progress. Observations should be conducted multiple times throughout the program period. The last round of observations should be conducted soon after the enforcement period is over. This post measurement can be compared to baseline and other rounds of observations to measure change over time.

Step 2: Gather Data

Gather multiple data types. Collect local crash and health-related data as well as SBO results.

Step 3: Plan Publicity

Reach out to community partners, other safety minded organizations, and other law enforcement agencies. Invite them to help develop the message and deliver it using their organization's methods and contacts.

Develop a message and plan for delivery. Identify the intended audience and research what tone and messaging resonate with them. Include local SBO results and health-related and crash data in the messaging. Use multiple methods of dissemination (e.g., news releases, social media, signs, posters, speaking at driver's education class). Do not forget to plan how information will be disseminated internally to keep law enforcement motivated and apprised of program activity.

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Plan a kickoff event (e.g., press conference, local news interviews) for the program. Invite local media and community partners to attend. Consider inviting local student groups as well as groups from local colleges, churches, or other organizations that might help boost the message to rural people to buckle up. Incorporate survivor stories if possible. Have program materials (e.g., brochures, posters) on hand and ready to distribute. Piggyback with National and Statewide occupant protection campaigns and utilize the materials/information.

Continue to push the message throughout the program period. Identify tactics that will easily keep stakeholders and the community updated with new seat belt use rates each month (e.g., group text or email, interoffice memos). Ensure news stations and other media outlets are aware that updates will arrive on an ongoing basis throughout the program period.

Step 4: Plan Enforcement

Choose multiple enforcement strategies to implement over the 12-month program period. Consider asking law enforcement in nearby areas to participate in multijurisdictional efforts.

Establish a timeline so that stepped-up seat belt enforcement happens each month. Ensure enforcement begins 1-2 weeks after program publicity begins.

Consider and plan for officer training regarding seat belt observations, enforcement, social media, and/or publicity and outreach during these planning phases.

Step 5: Implement the Program

Week 1-2

Get the message out. Conduct a kickoff event to get things started. Start program publicity 1-2 weeks before stepped-up seat belt enforcement begins. Ensure nearby LEAs are aware of the program and any significant planned events.

Week 2-3

Conduct planned enforcement and complete the Enforcement Activity Summary Form (Appendix C) to document the level of effort.

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Week 4

Measure seat belt use and compute results. Compare your results to baseline measurements. Update messaging to reflect the most recent results. Complete the Publicity & Outreach Activity Summary Form (Appendix D) to document the level of effort involved.

Weeks 5-52

Repeat publicity, enforcement and SBO monthly over the program period. Use SBO results for publicity and outreach. Update results each round of measurement. Share results with stakeholders and all law enforcement involved in the program. Keep track of the level of enforcement and publicity using the activity summary forms each month.

Step 6: Evaluate Program Impact

Compare monthly enforcement, and publicity with seat belt use rates gathered over the 12-month program period. Did seat belt use change from baseline? How did things change? Did the change take place in concert with certain publicity or enforcement actions?

Share results with stakeholders, community partners, and law enforcement. Amend program plans based on results. Be sure to recognize those who helped make the program a success and encourage them to keep up the good work.

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Step 1: Conduct Seat Belt Observations (SBO)

This program uses observational seat belt survey results to motivate and inform the local community as well as law enforcement. Combine survey results with health-related data to develop messaging for publicity. This same data can be used to encourage officers to remain engaged in a sustained seat belt enforcement effort. Law enforcement agencies can conduct their own seat belt observations using the following guidelines. The Field Guide to SBO (Appendix A) provides Do's and Don'ts and basic instructions for observers. It is a handy tool for observers to have with them while conducting observations in case questions arise.

Rules for Observers

As with any program, the safety of the observer and the motoring public is paramount. Observers should keep this in mind when making decisions about where and when to observe seat belts and should abandon observations at any point if their safety or motorists' safety is at risk. In general, **observers should wear a highly visible reflective vest and avoid wearing any elements of a Police Officer's uniform associated with enforcement.** Other rules for observers are:

- ▶ Use the same start times, locations, days of the week, and direction of traffic for each round of observations. If possible, use the same observer. Draw a map of each site location using the form on page B-1 to ensure observers return to the exact location for each round of observations.
- ▶ Don't guess. If seeing belt use is an issue due to sun glare or obstruction, a one-block shift in either direction (observing the same stream of traffic) is often the solution.
- ▶ Complete all sections of the observation form. Number the bottom of the forms if there are multiple pages and use paperclips or a stapler to keep multiple pages together.

Observing Seat Belt Use

Observing driver and passenger seat belt use may seem obvious but there are steps that should be taken to ensure the data collected provides accurate results. Be consistent with where and how data is collected. In an ideal world, the same observer would observe seat belt use at the same place, using the same methods, at the same time and day of the week for each round of observation. In real life, circumstances arise that keep this from occurring. Observers should follow these guidelines to assist in keeping consistent and accurate data collection.

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<REMEMBER...CONSISTENCY and ACCURACY are KEY!!!>

Observers should:

- 1) Stand in a safe location near the street.
- 2) Observe the closest lane of traffic.
- 3) If observing at an intersection with a red light, record belt use of vehicles stopped at the red light. Record information for as many stopped vehicles as time allows. If desired, record belt use of moving traffic once the light turns green.
- 4) TO OBSERVE MOVING TRAFFIC choose a method (i.e., reference point, every other car, or every two cars) to follow. The observer should follow the method and not pick and choose the vehicles to include in the sample. This will ensure a random sample is obtained and take the guesswork out of deciding which vehicles to observe. Note the method used on the site map and use the same method for each round of observations.
 - *Reference point (RP) method* - Choose a stationary RP up the road from where you stand to observe (e.g., a sign, a mailbox, a tree). Record information for the next vehicle that passes the RP. After writing down information for that vehicle, look to the RP and record information for the next vehicle that passes the RP. Continue with this method until either vehicles stop for a red light or the desired amount of observations are made.
 - *Every other car/every two-car method* – Record belt use for every other car or every third car. The observer should choose a pace that is comfortable and allows accurate documentation of belt use. Traffic density and observer preference will determine the pace. Do not try to record information for every car unless traffic is sparse.

What Info to Observe and Record

Data collection forms can be constructed to collect several variables. Observers can estimate and record demographic data such as sex, age, and race. Other information such as seating positions and various driving behaviors can be observed and recorded. A basic observational study will include:

- Vehicle type (Car, Truck, SUV, or Van)
- Driver sex (Male, Female, or Unsure)
- Driver belt use (Y = yes (belted), N = no (not belted), U = unsure)
- Front passenger sex belt use (when present)

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Vehicles to Observe/Not Observe

All vehicles passing through an observer's line of sight should not be included in the observational survey. It is difficult to observe seat belt use in unusually large/tall vehicle types and certain vehicle types may have drivers who do not belt due to job requirements. Cars, trucks,

vans, SUVs, taxis, and limos are all included. Similarly, emergency vehicles that adhere to these vehicle types should be included. RVs, trucks with 3+ axles, buses, and other vehicles that do not fit these normative patterns are generally not observed or recorded. See the Field Guide for SBO (Appendix A) for a more specific list.

Belted vs. Not Belted

It may seem obvious what ‘belted’ and ‘not belted’ should look like when observing seat belt use. However, there are instances when it is not so clear. For an adult to be recorded as belted, you must observe the seat belt stretched diagonally across the shoulder toward the center of the vehicle. All other configurations should be recorded as ‘not belted.’

“Unsure” Belt Use

There should be very few true ‘Unsure’ observations noted on the form. Observers should be cautious about confusing “I can’t tell if I saw a belt” vs. “I did not see a belt.” Below are some common reasons an observer might experience a large amount of “Unsure.”

| Reason | Solution |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inexperienced observer | <p>More practice is needed</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad visibility due to rain, sun glare, fog, etc. • Tinted windows | <p>Change positions. Move up or down the street slightly or cross the street to observe. Ensure the same stream of traffic is observed.</p> |

Organize Data

After observations are completed, observers should organize their data collection forms and turn them in as instructed by the survey organizer. Data forms and maps should be completed and organized by site. The observer should correct any writing that may not be legible (e.g., make sure “no’s” and “yes’s” in the seat belt column can be deciphered).

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Analyze and Interpret Results

Information from data collection forms can be keyed into an electronic spreadsheet (e.g., Excel or Access) or manually counted to compute results. A paper spreadsheet, like the one found on page B-3, and a calculator are helpful to use when computing results without a computer. Alternatively, if an agency has access to statistical analysis software, like SPSS or SAS, comprehensive analyses can be done.

When keypunching raw data into a spreadsheet, code raw data as a numerical value (e.g., 1= belted, 2= not belted) for each of the variables collected. Information for each observation will be entered on a single line on the spreadsheet. Typically, each column of data will represent one of the variables collected: 1) vehicle type (car, pickup truck, SUV, or van), 2) Occupant Type (driver or passenger), 3) occupant sex (male, female or unsure), and belt use (yes, no, or unsure). As mentioned previously, consistency and accuracy are key in providing data that can be trusted. This holds true for data entry and analysis. Check your work, then have someone else check your work or vice versa.

One advantage of using a spreadsheet to enter data is that it is possible to select variables that may be of particular interest. For example, it is possible to compare belt use rates by sex or vehicle type. Such basic analyses can provide a good indicator of change when compared across different time periods, regions, or program types.

Examples of seat belt usage rates that are easily computed and understood are:

- Total seat belt use (drivers and passengers combined)
- Drivers or passengers only
- Vehicle types
- Males vs females

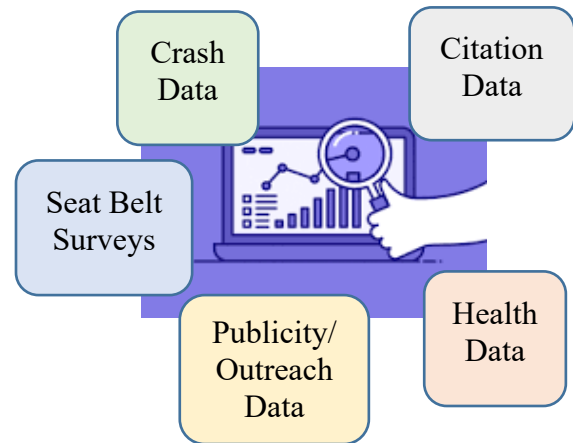
Conduct Multiple Rounds of Observations

Multiple rounds of observations should be conducted to measure the effects of any countermeasures implemented. The first round should be conducted before any publicity or enforcement is conducted in order to establish a **baseline** use rate. This rate will be compared to other rounds of observations to measure change. Observations should be completed monthly throughout the program period. Plan to conduct SBOs after any high visibility enforcement waves are conducted and share updated data internally and community-wide using planned communication strategies. Keep law enforcement and the community interested in and engaged with the program by regularly sharing data.

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Step 2: Gather Data

Traffic safety data is collected in order to provide lawmakers, citizens, the media, and community partners, and stakeholders with important facts and information regarding public safety. Data provides valuable context to consider when identifying problems and developing solutions. For instance, seat belt observations may help determine who does and who does not wear a seat belt. Is belt use lower among young or old drivers, male or female occupants? Are use rates lower in a particular vehicle type (e.g., pickup truck or passenger car), on a particular road type (arterial or local roads), or at a particular time of day? By tracking trends and changes over time, data can help identify where the problem is, how best to intervene, and determine if the chosen strategies were effective.



Data is valuable for the development of any effective program, but the conclusions drawn are only as good as the data collected. Using multiple types of data gathered from trusted and responsible sources will provide reliable results leading to valid conclusions. While consistent, reliable, and relevant data can be invaluable in creating effective enforcement strategies, sparse, unreliable, or insufficient data can quickly lead to spurious and misguided conclusions. When gathering and collecting data, planning and careful consideration are paramount in ensuring that conclusions can be confidently drawn.

Using data in all facets of a seat belt program (i.e., planning, implementation, and evaluation) will help build an effective program suited for the unique characteristics of your local community. SBO, crash, and health-related data should be combined and used in messaging. Publicity data and citation data are helpful when combined with SBO to help track the program's impact. For example, look at publicity and citation data in comparison to SBO results and see if seat belt usage changed after a certain amount of effort or specific countermeasure was employed. In addition, citation data can be shared with the community to show the level of effort expended by law enforcement.

Types of Data

| | Crash | SBO | Health Related | Publicity and Outreach | Citation |
|---------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| Uses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ID dangerous roadways and intersections • ID rates of belt use in crashes • Insights into nature, frequency, causes, locations, and outcomes of crashes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides more data about locations and user/non-user characteristics for problem ID • Real-time feedback on program • Justify efforts and encourage officers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale for program effort • Recruiting community partners to support local program efforts • Motivate community to buckle up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess effectiveness of varied media • Assess what tone and content are most effective/resonant • Understand how much to expect from outreach efforts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess prior levels of effort • Assess how much effort is necessary • Assess effectiveness of prior enforcement waves/efforts |
| Helpful Data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare local/State/nation belt rates in accidents • ID local crash ‘hot spots’ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belt use rates for local population • Use rates by demographics and other variables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs to the individual • Costs to the community • Effects on labor pool • Costs to first responders • Time off work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content of prior media • Engagement and Amplification of media • Awareness surveys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior citation rates • Prior rates relative to enforcement waves • Comparison between belts and other infractions |
| Notes | <p>Local crash data can be very limited. Try combining multiple years at the local level to get a clearer problem ID.</p> | <p>SBOs are a snapshot of belt use at a time and place. SBO will not give you a definitive use rate.</p> | <p>Data may not be available at the local level. Some costs, such as psychological impact, may be hard to measure.</p> | <p>Social Media metrics are not necessarily intuitive. A PIO or SMO is an invaluable resource in this capacity.</p> | <p>Often not a complete picture of prior efforts. Prior citations do not include other efforts (warnings, outreach, etc.)</p> |

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Crash data is invaluable in identifying dangerous roadways and intersections as well as belt use rates in serious and fatal crashes within a community. Officers can compare local belt use rates in serious and fatal crashes to State, region, and national averages. Crash data are also useful for identifying any seasonal differences or comparing level of risk by day of week (e.g., weekday vs. weekends), or time of day (e.g., commute time, nighttime). While this data can give insights into the frequency, locations, and general outcomes of crashes, local data is often too limited to draw firm conclusions. Try combining multiple years of data to create a better picture or widen the area considered “local” (e.g., use regional or statewide data instead of parish/city wide). Annual crash data for a given year usually take a long time to be published, the most recent results are one-two years after end of year.

Observational belt use data gives insights into locations, times of day, and general population demographics of the local belt use rate. The main advantage of belt observations data is that it provides real-time feedback of the effectiveness of the program as it is rolled out over time. This local use data can then be used internally to adjust any enforcement efforts or as content for the program messaging to the intended audience. Local SBO data can also be analyzed for specific variables and compared to broader State and national averages. Observational surveys are an effective indicator of seat belt use at the time and place the observations occurred, but it is a “snap-shot” of seat belt use, not a definitive use rate.

Health-related data includes many financial aspects of traffic crashes in addition to the actual rates of specific injuries. Buckled vs. unbuckled victims in crashes likely have different rates of serious injury and death that can be used in a compelling campaign. It is not just the immediate cost of hospitalization and treatment that must be considered, but also the potential long-term care costs (e.g., traumatic brain injury or spinal cord injury). Moreover, the reality of health care costs, lost wages, and overall financial impacts of unbelted crashes can be persuasive to the general population. By extension, the additional time and money spent by first responders dealing with unbuckled vs. buckled crash victims could help motivate law enforcement and citizens alike. At the local level, hospital discharge data may be available, but if not, State and national data exist that may resonate with the local population. Insights and data culled from publicity and outreach can likely inform how effective health-related data can be.

Publicity and Outreach can yield insights into the intended audience in addition to more traditional data. For some communities, this kind of data can include town halls, public forums, and other public group discussions wherein traffic safety is relevant and discussed. If your agency has a Public Information Officer or Social Media Officer, they can provide valuable evidence concerning what media marketing tactics are most effective in your community. The content, tone, timing, etc. of messaging should be considered so that the message reaches the

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intended audience in a manner conducive to acceptance. If your agency does not have access to a PIO or SMO, you can still reap valuable information from the tools provided by social media platforms. It can be difficult and a bit intimidating for someone who is not familiar with social media to track metrics and/or understand results, but these platforms do provide monitoring tools

that can show you what works and what doesn't as you develop a social media presence. Awareness surveys conducted locally can be useful for measuring the extent to which the message was seen and remembered by the target population. Although identifying and obtaining a representative sample is not easy, it is often a useful endeavor.

Citation data is a functional measurement of the level of effort put forth in prior programs and can inform decision-makers on what levels may be needed for future programs. Especially when paired with SBO data, citation data can show how enforcement efforts have focused on time, location, intended audience, and the type of infraction. This data can be used in messaging to help the community understand the characteristics and intentions of enforcement efforts. Citation data may not paint a complete picture of the effort put forth by law enforcement since it does not always include the number of warnings issued or the number of citizen contacts made. For a more complete picture, we would need to look at the number of enforcement hours focused on seat belt enforcement in conjunction with citation data.

For each of these data types, several sources exist to find reliable information at the local, State, and national level. The Insurance Institute of Highway Safety (IIHS) along with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and its inter-departmental Data-Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS) represent some of the greatest resources for general and nationwide data and data-driven procedures. For more State-specific data, NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), the Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA), and your State Highway Safety Offices (SHSO) have crash, injury, fatality, and citation data that can inform your enforcement program. While this data becomes scant and hard to use in a local environment, local Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) should have records of citations, enforcement efforts, and any prior HVE wave activities. If any local agencies have a Public Information Officer (PIO) or Social Media Officer (SMO), their insights into the content that resonates with local communities can prove invaluable. Similarly, local health networks and hospitals may have data that inspire officers and the general public alike.

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Step 3: Plan Program Publicity

Build a communications plan. Comprehensive communication means using varied and various communication structures to spread awareness of seat belt enforcement. Your LEA should capitalize on popular community events and participate in national and statewide awareness projects and use their content (infographics, PSAs, videos, etc.) in local messaging. Community partners and/or other safety-focused groups are helpful resources when developing a message as well as planning how the message will be disseminated. A good way to engage community partners and stakeholders in the program is to ask for their input in planning the communications

program. Consider developing a task force or coalition comprised of representatives from local safety-minded organizations that service your rural population. Offer to use the logo of organizations represented in the task force on program materials and ask that each organization help with publicity using their delivery systems.

Ideas for possible organizations to invite as members of a task force are:

- Other enforcement agencies
- Other local first responders
- Local Health Networks
- School Boards and organizations
- Local universities and colleges
- Civic organizations
- Head; Head to Clearer Thinking (4-H)
- Future Farmers of America (FFA)
- Local Festival committees

Local community leaders and local celebrities would also be valuable members of the group. These organizations and stakeholders are often involved with popular local events, parades, festivals, etc. that can be an excellent resource to spread the program message.

Create a message. SBO results should be used alongside other data types to create content that resonates with the intended audience and inspires them to buckle up. For example, local belt use rates, the average hospital costs of unbelted drivers in accidents, and the monthly number of local traffic accidents could be synthesized to encourage the local population to buckle up as well as provide an appealing safety rationale for local enforcement to intervene.

Intentionally develop content that promotes voluntary compliance with the law. The program message should:

- Bring attention to the problem of low seat belt use in the community
- Educate the community about the impacts of not wearing a seat belt
- Provide the community with information about proper restraint use
- Inform the community of any planned stepped-up enforcement efforts

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Provide talking points that are easy to understand and creative elements that can be customized (i.e., posters, social media blurbs, fill-in-the-blank releases, Op-Eds, video clips, etc.). Provide updated information (e.g., latest SBO results, summary of enforcement efforts) as soon as it is available and use hooks that will keep interest in the program piqued. Consider reaching out to a local celebrity or community leader and ask for their involvement in getting the message out. Enlist the help of the agency's PIO and/or SMO if one exists.

Develop efficient and effective message delivery strategies. Involving community partners in message development is encouraged. However, if community partners are not involved in developing a message, they should be involved with publicity and outreach for the program. Communicate with them as early as possible in the decision-making process so they feel confident asking the organizations they represent to spread the program's message. Communicate with them regularly throughout the program to track progress, traction, and interest, and to keep them engaged and enthusiastic after the initial push has worn off. Earned media, owned media, and/or grassroots marketing are effective and free or low-cost ways to keep the message active in and relevant to the local community. However, these strategies may take time to plan and implement. Examples of these strategies are listed below.

EARNED MEDIA

- Press release/Press events*
- Letters to the editor; Op-Ed*
- Radio/TV interviews
- Posters, flyers, brochures
- Letter to Traffic Safety Colleagues or Stakeholders*

OWNED MEDIA

- Newsletter
- Social Media
- Roadside signs, electronic message boards

GRASSROOTS MARKETING

- Taskforce/Coalitions
- Community Events
- Public Presentations

*Templates for these earned media materials can be found on NHTSA's Traffic Safety Marketing website www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov.

Feedback from community partners, PIOs, etc. can be used to determine the most effective message delivery system for the intended audience in your local community. Consider:

- WHERE will the message be distributed?
- WHEN will messages be disseminated?
- HOW will messages be delivered?
- WHO is most likely to receive the message?

LEAs should share program messaging using popular local media outlets, social media, local safety-focused organizations, and other stakeholders. Assess where people go for information in your community and find a way to effectively share your message in these locations.

Engage in outreach. Law enforcement officers can be provided with scripts and/or data points and asked to verbally share the information during citizen contacts when appropriate. Law enforcement at other agencies in the areas can be provided with program information and encouraged to do the same. These interactions could take place while on patrol, during presentations at schools or to other local organizations, at community events or when interviewed by the media. Officers should be ready with a tag line or quick fact and share it when the opportunity arises.

Use social media. Social media includes platforms that have the potential to quickly spread a message to a large, diverse population. The person(s) planning and implementing social media for this program should understand the power of the platforms used. Social media is not a tool for everyone. Only officers who want to engage should be doing so and any officer who is engaging should undergo social media training. Using a PIO is highly recommended.

The NHTSA report, *Social Media Practices in Traffic Safety* (Sack, 2019), identifies promising practices to consider when planning and implementing social media messaging:

- Reuse safety messaging on multiple platforms;
- Consider the tone of your safety messages;
- Use pictures, videos, and links strategically;
- Use hashtags selectively;
- Time the posting of content to meet stakeholders' needs;
- Collaborate with other State and local accounts to increase visibility of safety messaging.

Officers/LEAs can use social media to spread the program message by sharing personal experiences related to seat belts, posting photos taken in the community that complement the program, and streaming videos of officers sharing facts and first-hand stories about seat belts. Survivor stories can be recorded and passed along using social media. Anyone who will be representing the LEA on social media should undergo training before posting.

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The following summarizes a few tips from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) for LEAs to consider when using social media:

- Use social media platforms intentionally—find what your local community uses and don't over-extend.
- Law enforcement is often included in media coverage of bad news—use social media to spread some good news.
- Engage with key influencers in the community to generate and/or maintain interest (e.g., mayor, alderman, community groups, etc.)
- Prioritize quality engagement over numbers of retweets and followers.
- Be transparent.

Double-check messaging. After the communications plan has been established, take one more look at the plan. Run the message and ideas for program materials by community partners or stakeholders and ask for feedback on the language and content. Is it effective for and respectful of the intended audience? Is everything spelled correctly? Address any potential issues before putting the message out into the community.

Include an internal communications plan. Often, communications plans do not consider strategies for internal communication (i.e., law enforcement officers and/or community partners). However, routinely sharing data and information internally can help keep officers motivated and engaged, build camaraderie, as well as lead to adjustments in operations if needed. Suggestions for internal communication are:

- Use interoffice memos, emails, roll call meetings, group texts, bulletin boards, and/or social media to reach law enforcement personnel and community partners.
- Include slogans/hashtags in internal communications.
- Share uplifting or funny anecdotes officers have experienced related to the program to help build camaraderie.
- Give kudos for a job well done to specific law enforcement officers, collaborating units, or community partners.
- Use compelling data to remind law enforcement officers of the rationale behind the program effort. Ask that the information be shared when encountering violators.
- Organize information into a format that is easy to understand and remember (i.e., succinct bulleted facts list).
- Provide routine reminders about program schedules, planned enforcement strategies, as well as any changes to the program plan.

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Step 4: Plan Program Enforcement

Develop a plan for effective seat belt enforcement. The 2008 NHTSA study, *How States Achieve High Seat Belt Use Rates*, looked at case studies of States who implemented *Click It or Ticket* campaigns. It states, “statistical analyses suggest that the most important difference between the high and low belt use States is enforcement, not demographic characteristics or dollars spent on media.” (Hedlund, 2008)

The 2008 Hedlund study also found that high-visibility seat belt law enforcement was a key factor in all the high seat belt use States in the study. **High-Visibility Enforcement** or **HVE** combines enforcement with visibility elements and publicity. HVE incorporates enforcement strategies, such as enhanced patrols using visibility elements (e.g., electronic message boards, road signs, command posts, BAT mobiles, etc.) designed to make enforcement efforts obvious to the public. It is supported by a coordinated communication strategy and publicity. HVE may be enhanced through multi-jurisdictional efforts and partnerships between community leaders and/or organizations dedicated to the safety of the community.

Several HVE and other strategies that can be used to enforce seat belt laws have been developed by law enforcement. Some of these strategies are listed below. Note that State laws may prohibit some of these practices, like checkpoints or lane splitting. Please check with State and local ordinances before applying any enforcement strategy.

| <i>HVE Strategies</i> | | <i>Other Enforcement Strategies</i> | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturation Patrols | <input type="checkbox"/> Checkpoints | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotter Technique | <input type="checkbox"/> Intersection Enforcement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crackdowns | | <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarked Vehicles | <input type="checkbox"/> Stationary/Covert Enforcement |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle Patrols | <input type="checkbox"/> Lane Splitting |

Incorporate more than one of the listed strategies in combination with a comprehensive publicity plan to ensure a strong program. Data should be used to help make decisions such as where seat belt enforcement and enforcement enhancing elements might be used most effectively. Signs or electronic message boards can be used to display a seat belt message near or around any locations of concentrated seat belt enforcement.

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Step 5: Implementation

A suggested plan for rolling out the program is as follows. Consider your State’s and NHTSA’s campaign calendars when scheduling program implementation. *Plan to start the program outside of the National Click It or Ticket mobilization and other November seat belt campaigns.*

Weeks 1-2

Conduct seat belt observations. Compute results.

Gather data. Collect crash data, health-related data, seat belt observation results and any other information that will be used in creating the program message.

Weeks 2-4

Plan publicity. Look at data, and work with community partners to create program messaging. Develop program materials.

Weeks 4-6

Get the message out. Conduct a kickoff event to get things started. Start program publicity 1-2 weeks before stepped-up seat belt enforcement begins. Ensure other local LEAs and community partners are aware of the program.

Weeks 6-8

Conduct planned enforcement. Complete the Enforcement Activity Summary Form (Appendix C) to document the level of effort.

Week 9-10

Measure seat belt use. Compute results. Compare results to baseline. Update messaging. Complete the Publicity & Outreach Activity Summary Form (Appendix D) to document the level of effort involved in the initial phase of the program.

Weeks 10+

Repeat the publicity and enforcement cycle throughout the 12-month program period. Continue distribution of program materials and continue outreach and education. Use SBO results in publicity and outreach. Update results each month. Provide results to media outlets as well as stakeholders and law enforcement involved in the program. Keep track of the level of enforcement and publicity using the activity summary forms on a routine basis.

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Step 6: Evaluate Program Impact

Evaluation is sometimes left out of the program process but is a critical step of the overall program. Evaluating enforcement and publicity efforts will help shed light on what parts of the program were effective and what might need adjusting. Conduct evaluation throughout the program period and adjust as issues arise. Evaluating the program after its conclusion will help make future programs more efficient and effective. Useful evaluation tools and techniques are discussed below.

Seat Belt Observations. In addition to total belt use, SBO data can be used to shed light on other belt use behavior related to times of day, day of week, vehicle types, sex of driver/passenger. Track results over the program period and compare to baseline rates to measure change. Ensure observational surveys are conducted after the enforcement period ends. Did usage rates increase or decrease when compared to the baseline rate?

Enforcement data. Did the level of enforcement influence SBO results? Citation data as well as the number, timing, and type of enforcement strategies used can be compared with SBO results. Consider what was done differently and adjust accordingly. Keep track of all stepped-up seat belt enforcement each month using the Enforcement Activity Summary in Appendix C.

Program publicity. Did the message get out? Track the amount of news clips, videos, media impressions, website traffic, posters/brochures distributed. Use the Publicity & Outreach Activity Summary in Appendix D to document the level of effort put forth in publicity and outreach each month. Look at SBO results with publicity activity to see if certain strategies were more effective than others.

Evaluating social media. Social media success can be determined by examining two areas: *engagement* and *amplification*. *Engagement* tells you how people are responding to and interacting with your content. *Amplification* tells you how people are promoting your content and advocating for your cause. Some social media platforms have their own tracking programs and several social media tracking apps are available (e.g., Google Analytics, Oktopost, Keyhole). For general success measurements, there are a few basics:

- Track Likes and Shares—Facebook, Twitter, YouTube.
- Track growth of followers over time (e.g., last week, month, quarter, after a push)
- Track the number who interact—comments, retweets, shares, etc.
- Track clicks per post to see if people are visiting your links.
- Track demographics of followers to focus your content and outreach.

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References

- Hedlund, J. G. (2008). *How States Achieve High Seat Belt Use Rates*. Washington, D.C.: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- Sack, R. F. (2019). *Social Media Practices in Traffic Safety (Report No. DOT HS 812 673)*. Washington, D. C.: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- Schneider, H., Pfetzer, E., Black, W., & Dickey, J. (2017). *Factors Influencing Seatbelt Utilization in Louisiana and Strategies to Improve Usage Rate*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

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Technical Guide - Appendix A.
Field Guide for Seat Belt Observations

Field Guide for SBO

BASIC STEPS:

- 1) **Select 4-5 locations** dispersed throughout the community as observation sites.
 - Consider using locations that have frequent crashes and moderate to high traffic.
- 2) **Observe belt use** for 200-250 vehicles at each location.
 - A total sample of 1,000-1,200 occupants
- 3) **Compute results.**
- 4) **Repeat.** Conduct several rounds/waves of observations.
 - Establish a baseline use rate.
 - Use the baseline rate as a comparison to gauge progress.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Data collectors/observers should have the following materials.

- **Blank site map and data collection forms (see Appendix B for example forms)**
- Clipboard & pens
- Reflective safety vest
- Paper clips or stapler (don't forget staples)
- Summary form (see example form on page B-3)



What NOT to do when observing seat belts

- ⊗ Memorize multiple car/occupant usage and try to write it all down from memory
- ⊗ Rush to record more cars in a less accurate manner (Strive for QUALITY, not quantity)
- ⊗ Think “But I’m missing cars!” (you’re not)

“Unsure” Belt Use

| Reason | Solution |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inexperienced observer | More practice is needed |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad visibility due to rain, sun glare, fog, etc. • Tinted windows | Change positions. Move up or down the street slightly or cross the street to observe. Ensure the same stream of traffic is observed. |

Who to Observe

| <u>DO</u> Observe: | <u>DO NOT</u> Observe: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Front seat occupants (driver and outboard passengers) ✓ Children in the front seat who are in booster seats or wearing adult seat belt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ Rear seat occupants ⊗ Child safety seats in the front or rear seat |

| <u>DO</u> Observe: | <u>DO NOT</u> Observe: |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Cars</u>, station wagons ✓ Pickup <u>Trucks</u> ✓ Minivans and cargo <u>vans</u> ✓ <u>SUVs</u>, crossovers ✓ Emergency vehicles (passenger vehicle types only) ✓ Taxis, limos | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ RVs/Campers ⊗ Semi-trucks (3+ axles), semi-trailers, aka tractor-trailers ⊗ Buses ⊗ Box trucks, dump trucks, garbage trucks, cement trucks, oil delivery trucks ⊗ Mail trucks (USPS, UPS, FedEx) ⊗ Fire engines ⊗ Ambulances |

Belted vs. Not Belted

| Correct Belt Use = Belted | Incorrect Belt Use = NOT Belted |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Belt across shoulder diagonally toward center of the vehicle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ Shoulder belt underneath the arm ⊗ Shoulder belt behind the back ⊗ No shoulder belt ⊗ Child sitting in adult's lap ⊗ Multiple occupants sharing 1 seat belt ⊗ Shoulder belt pulled/held across the chest but not actually "clicked" |

REMEMBER CONSISTENCY and ACCURACY are KEY!!!

**Technical Guide - Appendix B.
Seat Belt Survey Forms**

Seat Belt Observation Site Map

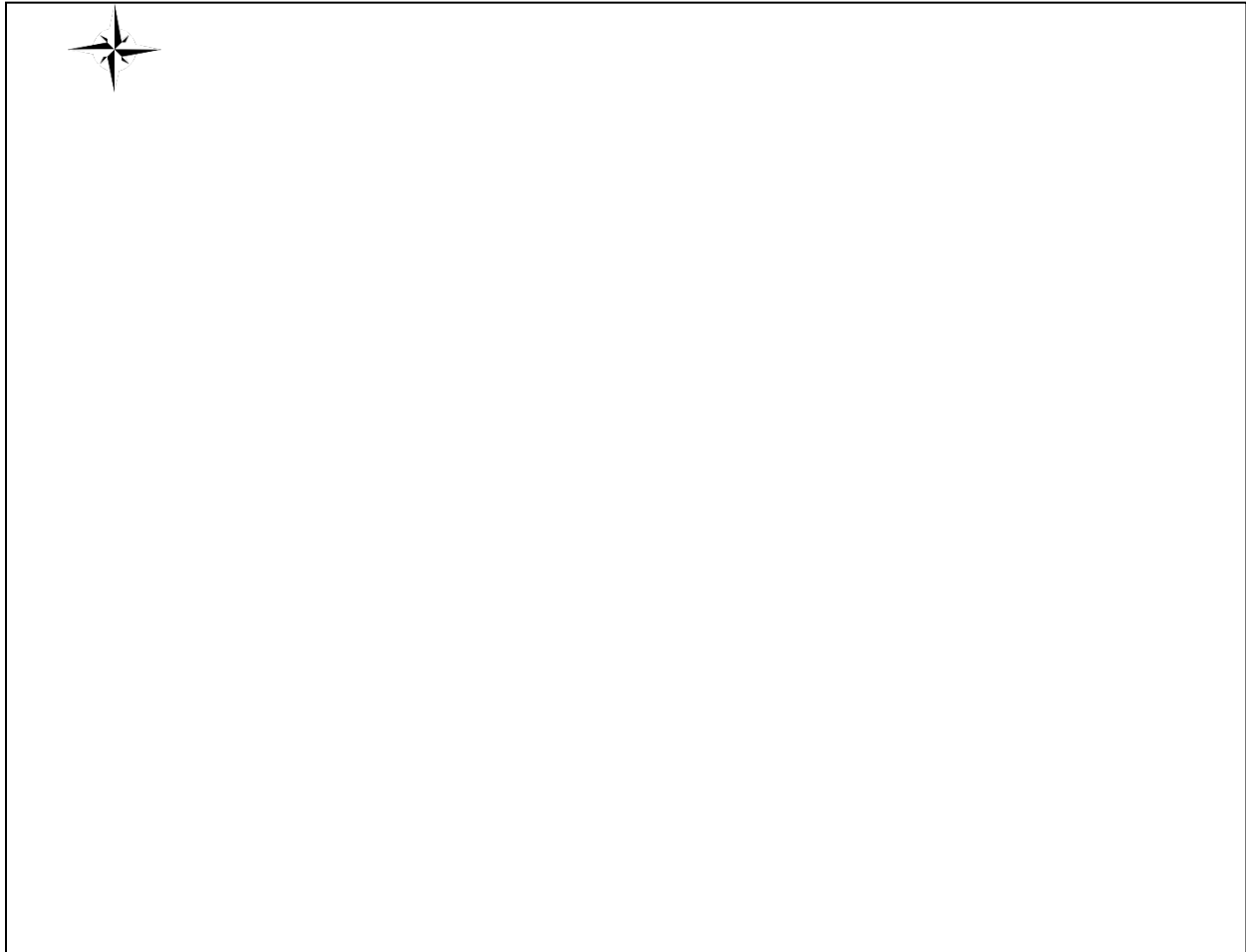
Use the box below to draw a map that indicates exactly where the observer stood to observe seat belt use for the first round of seat belt observations. Include the lane(s) of traffic observed and significant landmarks. This map will be used to ensure all rounds of observations can be conducted exactly the same by any observer returning to the site.

Location: _____
(Street) (Cross Street or other landmark)

Site #: _____ **Direction of traffic observed:** _____

Notes: _____

Diagram:



Seat Belt Observation Data Collection Form

SITE NUMBER: _____ **SITE:** _____
OBSERVER INITIALS: _____

COUNTY: _____ **DIRECTION OF TRAVEL OBSERVED:** N S E W

DATE: ____-____-____ **DAY OF WEEK:** _____

START TIME: _____ **AM / PM** (Observe 250 VEHICLES)

| WEATHER CONDITIONS | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Clear/Sunny | 4 Fog |
| 2 Light Rain | 5 Wet pavement/ not raining |
| 3 Cloudy | |

| Veh. # | Veh. Type C=Car T=Truck S=SUV V=Van | Sex | | Belt Use | | Veh. # | Veh. Type C=Car T=Truck S=SUV V=Van | Sex | | Belt Use | |
|-----------|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|--|
| | | M=Male F=Female U=Unsure | Y=Yes N=No U=Unsure | M=Male F=Female U=Unsure | Y=Yes N=No U=Unsure | | | M=Male F=Female U=Unsure | Y=Yes N=No U=Unsure | | |
| 1 | | | | | | 26 | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | 27 | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | 28 | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | 29 | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | 30 | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | 31 | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | 32 | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | 33 | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | | 34 | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | 35 | | | | | |
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| 13 | | | | | | 38 | | | | | |
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| 21 | | | | | | 46 | | | | | |
| 22 | | | | | | 47 | | | | | |
| 23 | | | | | | 48 | | | | | |
| 24 | | | | | | 49 | | | | | |
| 25 | | | | | | 50 | | | | | |

Observational Seat Belt Survey Results Summary

Write the number of driver/passenger observations made for each site in the table below. Do not include “unsures” or “unknowns.” Add drivers and passengers to calculate Total columns. Calculate DRIVER use rate by dividing the number of belted drivers (DY) by the total number of drivers observed (DT), then multiply by 100. Calculate the PASSENGER use rate by dividing the number of belted passengers (PY) by the total number of passengers observed (PT), then multiply by 100. Calculate TOTAL seat belt use by dividing the number of belted drivers and passengers (DY+PY) by the Total # Drivers & Passengers, then multiply by 100. The same formulas can be used to narrow results within the sample. Seat belt use rates for specific variables (e.g., vehicle type, sex, age group, etc.) can be computed simply by entering the number of yes’s and no’s for drivers and passengers of the specific variable. For example, to find the seat belt use rate for males, simply count the number of male drivers and male passengers and use the formulas in the top row of the worksheet to help compute rates.

| Site # | Driver “Yes” (DY) | Driver “No” (DN) | Total # Drivers Observed (DT) | Driver Use % DY/DT x100 | Passenger “Yes” (PY) | Passenger “No” (PN) | Total # Passengers Observed (PT) | Passenger Use % PY/PT x100 | Total “Yes” DY+P Y | Total “No” DN+PN | Total # Drivers & Passengers | Total Use % Total yes/total D&P x100 |
|--------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | 167 | 34 | 201 | 83.1% | 89 | 14 | 103 | 86.4% | 256 | 48 | 304 | 84.2% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Total | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Technical Guide - Appendix C.
Enforcement Activity Summary Form

Enforcement Activity Summary NHTSA Seat Belt Demonstration

Agency: _____ Today's Date: _____

Answers reflect enforcement conducted during the month of: _____

Total # of participating officers: _____ Total # seat belt enforcement hours: _____

Total # of traffic enforcement hours: _____ Total # of citizen contacts: _____

| <u>Violation</u> | <u>Citations</u> | <u>Warnings</u> |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Adult Seat Belt | _____ | _____ |
| Speeding | _____ | _____ |
| Child Restraint | _____ | _____ |
| Distracted Driving | _____ | _____ |
| Other Traffic | _____ | _____ |

Alcohol/Drug related activity: _____

Other arrests or notable activity: _____

Name of partnering agency (if applicable): _____

Description of seat belt enforcement techniques used: _____

Technical Guide - Appendix D.
Publicity & Outreach Activity Summary Form

Publicity & Outreach Activity Summary
NHTSA Seat Belt Demonstration

Reporting agency: _____ Today's date: _____
Information reflects publicity/outreach for the month of: _____
Total # project mgmt. hours: _____ Total # officers participating in publicity: _____
Rank of officer(s) who participated in publicity/outreach events: _____

Please provide the total number of publicity events that occurred for this program:
Press release: _____ PSA: _____ Printed story: _____
Press conference/News briefing: _____ TV news story: _____
Other (describe): _____

Please provide the name of any media outlets that aired a story/article related to this program:

Please indicate the type of content contained in messaging:

- Enforcement-centered Seat belt observation results Health-related data
 Economic/societal costs Other (describe) _____

The items below relate to **all publicity and outreach used for this seat belt demonstration program** (i.e., enforcement, educational, general program messaging).

- ❖ Indicate type(s) of **social media** used (check all that apply):
 Twitter Instagram SnapChat Facebook
 Agency website Other (describe) _____

*Project Mgmt/Publicity/Outreach Activity Summary
NHTSA Seat Belt Demonstration (cont.)*

Please provide applicable Twitter handle(s), hashtags, Facebook page, website addresses, etc.: _____

❖ Indicate types of **signage** used (check all that apply):

Roadside signs Posters

Electronic message boards Memes

Other (describe) _____

Approx. location of signs: _____

Brief description of message: _____

❖ Describe any **community outreach** efforts (e.g., speaking engagements, attending community events, handing out fliers) in which your agency or community partners participated for this program.

❖ Please provide the names of **partnering agencies or community partners** who may have helped with publicity or outreach efforts this month.

❖ Please provide and describe any **costs** associated with the development and distribution of any earned media this month.

Technical Guide - Appendix E.
Data Resources

FOR BINGHAM COUNTY, IDAHO

CRASH DATA

Statewide and local crash data is available from the Idaho Transportation Department's website: <https://itd.idaho.gov/safety/>



Also check out WebCARS, the web-based crash analysis reporting system developed by Idaho's Office of Highway Safety. <https://apps.itd.idaho.gov/apps/webcars/>

NHTSA's web portal is another source for national, State and local level crash information. <https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/STSI.htm>



OBSERVATIONAL SEAT BELT DATA



Locate and use multiple years of statewide belt use data using observational survey reports posted on the Idaho Transportation Department's website:



National seat belt use rates can be found on the NHTSA website under "Risky Driving." <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts>



BCSO will conduct monthly observational surveys of seat belt use in Bingham County, Idaho. Instructions for setting up and conducting observations are in presented in this document. Preusser Research Group, Inc. is available to assist.



CONTACT: Kim Elliott, Project Manager, kelliott@preussergroup.com (662) 236-9288.

PUBLICITY/OUTREACH DATA



BCSO's Public Information Officer (PIO) can help track publicity results for local programs.



The Idaho Transportation Department may be able to provide publicity data for the grant-funded programs in your area.



Refer to NHTSA's 2019 published report, *Social Media Practices in Traffic Safety* (Sack, R., et al) for useful ideas. Provide a copy or link to this document to your PIO. There are many good examples for how and where to make use of social media.


<https://www.ghsa.org/resources/NCREP-SocialMedia19>



Find seat belt related stats and information on the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSAs) website. <https://www.ghsa.org/resources/NCREP-SocialMedia19>



In addition, customizable State seat belt safety fact sheets, like the one pictured below, are available from the CDC. A program logo or LEA logo can be used to replace the CDC logo (circled at the bottom left of the first page). The customized fact sheets can then be used to promote the local program. <https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/seatbelts/states.html>




Keep Louisiana safe. Encourage drivers and passengers to buckle up.

This fact sheet provides a snapshot of motor vehicle occupant deaths and seat belt use and an overview of proven strategies for increasing the use of seat belts, car seats, and booster seats. The information can help local public health decisionmakers and community partners set goals, and identify relevant strategies to encourage people to buckle up.

Fast Facts

- Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death during the first three decades of American lives.
- By wearing seat belts and properly buckling children into age- and size-appropriate car seats and booster seats, you can reduce the risk of serious injury or death in a crash to half.
- Although most drivers in the United States follow these safety practices, only about 86% of all drivers wear seat belts.
- These data show what's happening in your state.



MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT DEATHS

Number of Deaths, 2003-2012

6,533 motor vehicle occupants were killed in Louisiana

Rate of Deaths by Age (per 100,000 population), 2012

| Age Group | Rate |
|-----------|------|
| 0-20 | 4.8 |
| 21-34 | 10.9 |
| 35-54 | 6.8 |
| 55+ | 10.1 |
| All ages | 7.9 |

Rate of Deaths by Gender (per 100,000 population), 2012

| Gender | Rate |
|--------|------|
| Male | 9.4 |
| Female | 4.7 |

RESTRAINT USE

Percentage of Drivers and Front Seat Passengers Wearing Seat Belts

| Category | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| NATIONAL (all states) | 86% |
| LOUISIANA | 79% |

Wearing together, we can help keep people safe on the road—every day.

LOUISIANA

SEAT BELT AND CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS

- Drivers and adult front seat passengers must wear seat belts in the District of Columbia and all states except New Hampshire.
- In Louisiana, seat belt laws are primary. They cover drivers, as well as passengers age 13 and older in all seats.
- Child restraint laws vary by state. For up-to-date information on these laws in your state, check with the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety at www.iihs.org.

What Works

The strategies in this section are effective for increasing seat belt, car seat, and booster seat use. They are recommended by The Guide to Community Preventive Services and/or have been demonstrated to be effective in reviews by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Different strategies may require different resources for implementation or have different levels of impact. Find strategies that are right for your state.

Strategies to increase seat belt use

- Primary seat belt laws** allow police officers to stop and ticket someone for not buckling up. On average, primary laws result in higher rates of seat belt use than **secondary seat belt laws**, which allow officers to give tickets only if they have pulled the driver over for another reason. Seat belt laws are most effective when they cover occupants in all seats of the vehicle.
- Increased penalties** for violating seat belt laws may include higher fines or points on a driver's license.
- Short-term, high-visibility enforcement** involves a brief period of increased police effort including checkpoints or saturation patrols. These efforts are highly publicized through a **media campaign** that uses both earned media coverage and paid advertisements. Combining law enforcement and media coverage is particularly effective for reaching people who typically don't use seat belts regularly, such as men, teens, and young adults.
- Combined nighttime enforcement programs** are short-term, highly visible enforcement strategies. They are conducted at night, when seat belt use is lowest, and crashes are most common. They are combined with enforcement of other laws, such as impaired driving laws. This can help law enforcement target limited funding and resources for the greatest public safety impact.

Strategies to increase car seat and booster seat use

- Child restraint laws** require children riding in a car to use age-appropriate restraint devices (car seats, booster seats, or seat belts) appropriate for their age, height, and weight. Strengthening current laws with **higher seat provisions** helps reduce injuries and deaths by requiring children who have outgrown car seats to use booster seats through age 8 years or until seat belts fit properly.
- Behavioral enforcement programs** for child passenger safety are similar to those used for seat belt use (see above). Effective programs are short-term, highly visible in the community, and advertised widely in the media.
- Discussion plus education programs** help parents and caregivers get access to car seats through giveaways, loans, or low-cost rentals. They also teach the importance of car seat use and how to properly use and install them.
- Incentive and education programs** reward parents or children with coupons or other prizes for correctly using car seats. Programs offer print materials, videos, or other instructional aids for parents and caregivers.

For More Information

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety for:

- Injuries, costs, and other data on motor vehicle crashes.
- Detailed information on effective strategies to improve seat belt use.
- Detailed information on effective strategies to improve child passenger safety.

Find this and other state-specific information at www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/states.html.

Updated: December 2016



CITATION DATA



Inquire within your LEA for counts of citations, warnings, and/or citizen contacts.



Information from your State's Highway Safety Office and other LEAs in the area might provide insight into the enforcement effort put forth in other areas.



HEALTH RELATED DATA

Your state's highway safety office should be the first place to check for health-related data for your local area. CDC also provides online tools that can be used to generate a customized report of injury data for your area. The WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System) is an “interactive, online database that provides fatal and nonfatal injury, violent death, and cost of injury data. Researchers, the media, public health professionals, and the public can use WISQARS™ data to learn more about the public health and economic burden associated with unintentional and violence-related injury in the United States.” <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>



Other health-related data associated with motor vehicle crashes are available from these organizations:



<https://itd.idaho.gov/safety/>



<https://cdan.nhtsa.gov>



<https://www.nsc.org/>



Insurance Institute for Highway Safety
Highway Loss Data Institute

<https://www.iihs.org/>



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Reach out to safety-minded organizations or advocates when planning your program. These partnerships can be a resource for crash and health-related data. Members can also lend valuable insight during the planning process and utilize their resources to help multiply the message.

Local

- Alive at 25 – Driver’s Awareness Course through the National Safety Council
- Bingham County Schools
- Bingham Memorial Hospital
- Blackfoot Community Center
- Blackfoot/Bingham County Youth Coalition
- Blackfoot Police Department

State

- Idaho State Police – District 5
- Idaho Traffic Safety Commission
- ThinkFirst of Idaho (National Injury Prevention Foundation)

National

- Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety
- American Automobile Association (AAA)
- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACOP)
- National Organization for Youth Safety (NOYS)
- National Road Safety Foundation (NRSF)

FOR RAPIDES PARISH, LOUISIANA



CRASH DATA



Query local crash information using the Louisiana Crash Data System located on the LHSC website: www.lahighwaysafety.org



Also check out Louisiana State University's Center for Analytics, Research & Transportation Safety website for a variety of crash reports: <http://carts.lsu.edu/>



NHTSA's web portal is another source for national, State and local level crash information. <https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/STSI.htm>



OBSERVATIONAL SEAT BELT DATA



Locate and use multiple years of statewide belt use data using the Statewide Louisiana Seat Belt Observational Survey (Daytime). Find it on LHSC's web site:

<http://www.lahighwaysafety.org/Pages/OurPrograms/OccupantProtection.aspx>



National seat belt use rates can be found on the NHTSA website under "Risky Driving." <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts>



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA
MAYOR JEFFREY W. HALL

APD will conduct monthly observational surveys of seat belt use in Alexandria. Instructions for setting up and conducting observations are presented in this document.

**Preusser Research Group, Inc. is available to assist.
CONTACT: Kim Elliott, Project Manager,
kelliott@preussergroup.com**





PUBLICITY/OUTREACH DATA

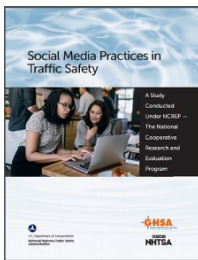


CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA
MAYOR JEFFREY W. HALL

APD's Public Information Officer (PIO) can help track publicity results for local programs.



The LHSC may be able to provide publicity data for grant-funded programs in Louisiana.



Refer to NHTSA's 2019 published report, *Social Media Practices in Traffic Safety* (Sack, R., et al) for useful ideas. Provide a copy or link to this document to your PIO. There are many good examples for how and where to make use of social media. https://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/NCREP_SocialMedia19.pdf



Find seat belt related stats and information on the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSAs) website. <https://www.ghsa.org/issues/seat-belts>



In addition, customizable State seat belt safety fact sheets, like the one pictured below, are available from the CDC. A program logo or LEA logo can be used to replace the CDC logo (circled on the bottom left of the first page). The customized fact sheets can then be used to promote the local program. <https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/seat-belts/states.html>

Buckle Up: Restraint Use in LOUISIANA

MOTOR VEHICLE OCCUPANT DEATHS

Number of Deaths, 2005-2012: 6,533 motor vehicle occupants were killed in Louisiana.

Rate of Deaths by Age (per 100,000 population), 2012

| Age Group | Male | Female |
|-----------|------|--------|
| 0-20 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| 21-34 | 11.1 | 11.1 |
| 35-44 | 11.1 | 11.1 |
| 45-54 | 11.1 | 11.1 |
| 55+ | 11.1 | 11.1 |

Rate of Deaths by Gender (per 100,000 population), 2012

| Gender | Rate |
|--------|------|
| Male | 11.1 |
| Female | 11.1 |

RESTRAINT USE

Percentage of Drivers and Front Seat Passengers Wearing Seat Belts

| Category | Percentage |
|-----------|------------|
| NATIONAL | 86% |
| LOUISIANA | 79% |

What Works

- **Primary seat belt laws** allow police officers to stop and ticket someone for not buckling up. On average, primary laws result in higher rates of seat belt use than secondary laws which allow officers to give tickets only if they have pulled the driver over for another reason. Seat belt laws are most effective when they cover occupants at all seats of the vehicle.
- **Increased penalties** for violating seat belt laws may include higher fines, or points on a driver's license.
- **Seat laws, high-visibility enforcement** involves a brief period of increased police efforts including checkpoints or saturation patrols. These efforts are highly publicized through a media campaign that makes both seat belt media coverage and paid advertisements. Combining law enforcement and media coverage is particularly effective for reaching people who typically don't use seat belts regularly for such as seniors and young adults.
- **Combined nighttime enforcement programs** are short-term, highly visible enforcement strategies they are conducted at night when seat belt use is lowest and crashes are most common. They are combined with enforcement of other laws, such as impaired driving laws. This can help law enforcement target limited funding and resources for the greatest public safety impact.

Strategies to Increase car seat and booster seat use

- **Child restraint laws** require children riding in a car to use approved restraint devices (car seats, booster seats) or use belts appropriate for their age, height, and weight. To strengthen current laws, with **booster seat provisions** helps reduce injuries and deaths by ensuring children who have outgrown car seats to use booster seats through age 8 years or until seat belts fit properly.
- **Booster seat enforcement programs** for child passenger safety are similar to those used for seat belt use (see above). Effective programs are short-term, highly visible in the community, and award tickets for the media.
- **Distribution and education programs** help parents and caregivers get access to car seats through giveaways, loans or low-cost rentals. They also teach the importance of rear seat and booster programs use and installation.
- **Insurance and education programs** reward parents or child with coupons or other prizes for completing car seat. Programs offer prizes, materials, videos, or other motivational aids for parents and caregivers.



CITATION DATA



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA
MAYOR JEFFREY W. HALL

Inquire within your LEA for counts of citations, warnings, and/or citizen contacts.



Information from State and other LEAs in the area might provide insight into the enforcement effort put forth in other areas.



HEALTH RELATED DATA

Your State’s highway safety office should be the first place to check for health-related data for your local area. CDC also provides online tools that can be used to generate a customized report of injury data for your area. The WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System) is an “interactive, online database that provides fatal and nonfatal injury, violent death, and cost of injury data. Researchers, the media, public health professionals, and the public can use WISQARS™ data to learn more about the public health and economic burden associated with unintentional and violence-related injury in the United States.”

<https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>

Other health-related data associated with motor vehicle crashes are available from these organizations:



www.lahighwaysafety.org



<https://cdan.nhtsa.gov>



<https://www.nsc.org/>



<https://www.iihs.org/>



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Local

- Rapides Parish Council on Aging
- Rapides Parish Medical Society
- Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office
- Rapides Parish Schools

State

- CenLa Highway Safety Coalition
- Destination Zero Deaths
- Louisiana State Police – Troop E
- LA Passenger Safety Task Force/Buckle Up Louisiana
- ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Ark-La-Tex Chapter

National

- American Automobile Association (AAA)
- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACOP)

Appendix C: Interim Summary Reports

C1. Interim Summary Report Bingham County Sheriff's Office

INTERIM SUMMARY OF PROGRAM AND RESULTS Increasing Seat Belt Use Among Rural Populations

NHTSA Contract/Task Order: DTNH2216D00019/DTNH2217F00176

June 14, 2021

Written for Bingham County Sheriff's Office
by
Preusser Research Group, Inc.



PREUSSER
RESEARCH
GROUP, INC.

The intent of this report is to help the Bingham County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) see the effort put forth by the BCSO for the NHTSA's Rural Seat Belt Demonstration program and to demonstrate how seat belt data be can used to help plan future enforcement and publicity activities. Results in this report should not be considered scientific but can be used to gauge the efforts put forth to date and help BCSO better estimate the level of effort needed to increase seat belt use as the program period progresses.

Interim Summary of Program and Results
Project: Increasing Seat Belt Use Among Rural Populations
Bingham County Sheriff's Office
September 2020 - May 2021

The Bingham County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) is participating in a seat belt demonstration project sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that aims to increase seat belt use among rural populations. BCSO has put forth a sustained effort to combat lagging seat belt use in Bingham County. Since the program began in October 2020, BCSO has completed the following:

- Issued 10X more seat belt citations than the amount issued in 2017, 2018, 2019.
- Dedicated more than 320 hours to seat belt enforcement.
- Conducted monthly publicity or outreach focused on seat belts.
- Completed monthly observational seat belt surveys.

BCSO has done an excellent job completing the requirements for this program. Results of seat belt observations when coupled with seat belt enforcement data suggest that seat belt use was at its highest when seat belt enforcement hours and/or citations were highest. However, despite the effort put forth by BCSO, driver seat belt use in Bingham County continues to be about 20%age points below the statewide use rate of 85% according to BCSO's monthly seat belt observation results.²

BCSO's seat belt survey results have shown some interesting trends. Nine observational surveys have been completed from September 2020 to May 2021 and results have consistently shown that:

- 70-80% of female drivers in Bingham County are buckled up; and
- Pickup truck drivers and male drivers are belted less frequently than other groups.

Drivers of pickup trucks and males seem to be pulling the overall use rate down (See Appendix: Figures 5 and 6). The seat belt use rate in Bingham County might see a significant increase if these two groups could be convinced to wear seat belts. Strategic messaging coupled with highly visible outreach and enforcement might be an effective way to reach these groups of drivers.

Results of PRG's focus groups conducted for this program indicate that Bingham County drivers have respect for local law enforcement. The general thought among participants was that local law enforcement "is on our side" and that law enforcement (or other first responders) were a trustworthy source to deliver a seat belt safety message.

"They're the ones that really understand how important this is. They've seen what can happen to people with their own eyes, and they have stories to tell."

Focus group participants also indicated that the most persuasive motivator to wear seat belts was a concern for the safety of family members and other loved ones – not only the direct risk of injury to the lives and well-being of family members but also the indirect harm to one's family

² Idaho Office of Highway Safety, 2019 Seat Belt Survey

that would result from one's own serious injury or death due to an unbuckled crash (e.g., loss of work, inability to care for oneself).

"That's your message right there. Not using your seat belt can have a devastating effect on your own life and the life of your family."

"I want to be here for my loved ones. It's not just about me; it's about what would happen to them if something should happen to me. That's definitely the most persuasive reason for me."

BCSO has conducted a significant amount of additional seat belt enforcement for this program than what is usual for the department. It may be that adding strategic messaging to the current increased focus on seat belt compliance is what is needed to push seat belt use rates up closer to the average statewide use rate.

PRG recommends the following interventions for the remainder of the program period:

- Continue stepped-up seat belt enforcement that is **VISIBLE** to the community.
- Conduct publicity and outreach in ways that are highly **VISIBLE** to the community.
- **Use messaging that will resonate with males and pickup truck drivers.**
- Focus messaging on the possible changes a family could face if the head of household is severely or fatally injured in an unbuckled crash.
- BCSO and/or other first responders conduct outreach and share personal accounts of what has been witnessed on the job or experienced because of an unbuckled crash.

The attached appendix provides an analysis of seat belt observation data used to draw some of the conclusions discussed in the above text.

Interim Report Bingham County - Appendix

The BCSO has conducted monthly observational seat belt surveys as a requirement for this program. BCSO deputies have observed 1,200 passenger vehicles each wave of seat belt observations. Observers captured data for drivers and passengers the first four surveys (September – December) but stopped collecting data for passengers after the December survey. To ensure consistency in results over time, results presented in this report reflect data analysis for drivers only.

Seat belt use as observed monthly by BCSO is shown in Figure 1. Seat belt use was estimated to be 60.8% in May 2021. This is a 3.3 percentage point drop from April to May 2021.

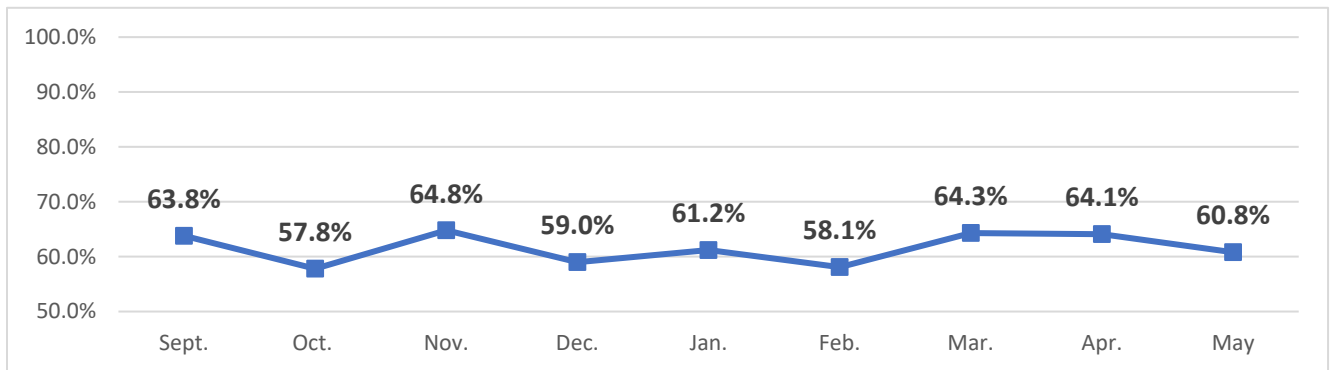


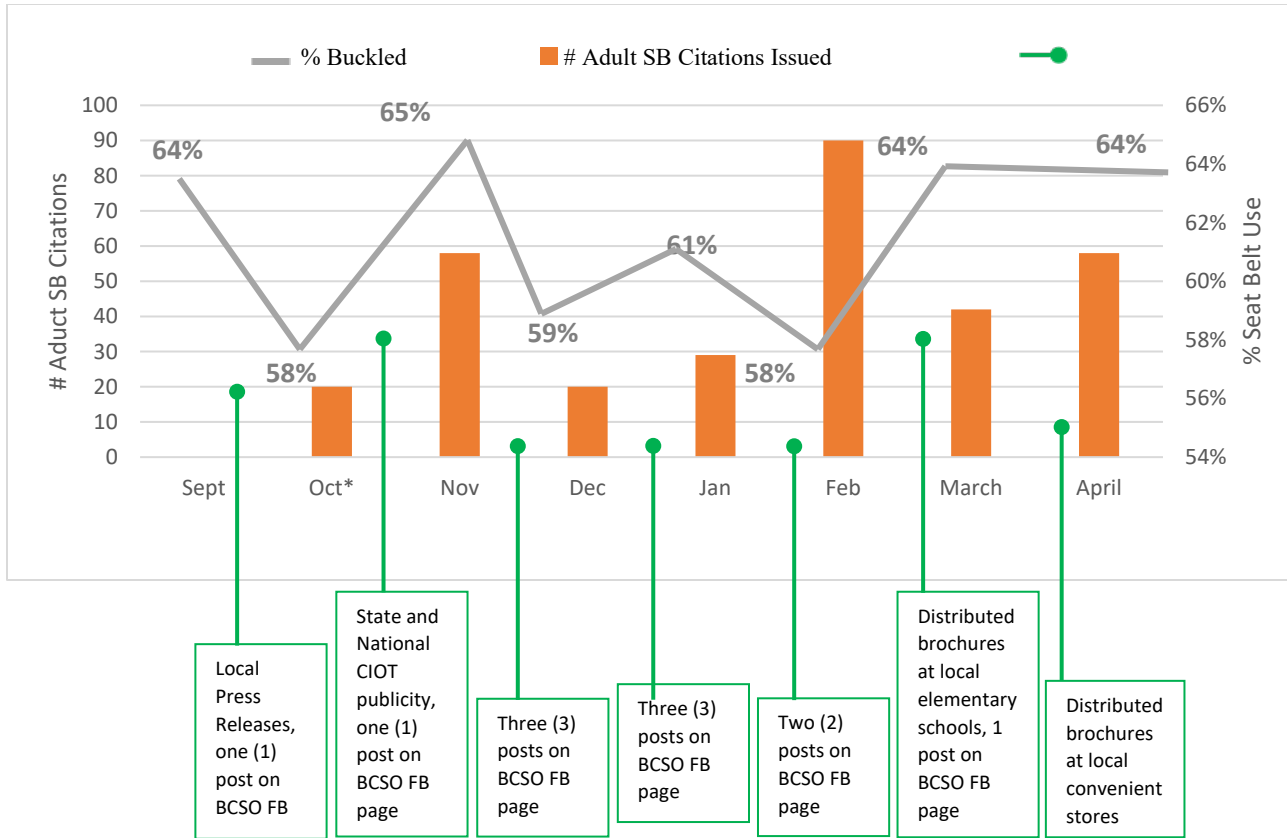
Figure 1. Driver Seat Belt Use by Month, September 2020-April 2021, BCSO Observational

Survey

The first seat belt observations (SBO) were made in September 2020. The second wave (W2) of observations was completed October 12-14, 2020. The earliest publicity for this program is a press release dated October 9, 2020. BCSO made their first Facebook post to announce the program on October 13, 2020, and stepped-up seat belt enforcement began October 19, 2020. In summary, October's seat belt observations took place just after the publicity began and just before enforcement began.

Figure 2 illustrates the monthly amount of seat belt citations issued by BCSO per month along with a general description of publicity/outreach for each month. Seat belt use as measured by BCSO is also illustrated.

The highest seat belt usage (64.8%) was measured in November at the beginning of the National and Statewide Thanksgiving *Click It or Ticket* campaign. The NHTSA communications calendar indicates that paid media and enforcement mobilization took place November 9-29. The Idaho Transportation Department also conducted statewide publicity for the campaign. The increase in seat belt use measured by BCSO most likely was influenced by the increased publicity and enforcement.



*October citation totals include seat belt warnings. BCSO reported issuing seat belt warnings in the inaugural month of the program period but reported none in the months following.

Figure 2. Driver Seat Belt Use and BCSO Enforcement and Publicity by Month, Sept. 2020-April 2021

A drop in seat belt use was measured after November. Seat belt enforcement decreased and Facebook posts on the BCSO Facebook page was the only publicity. The second highest seat belt use occurs after a winter lull in seat belt enforcement and publicity. Enforcement picks back up in late February when BCSO issues more seat belt citations than any other month in the program period. 75% of enforcement hours were completed after the observational survey was completed in February. Seat belt use increased from 58.1% in February to 64.3% in March. BCSO deputies visited school assemblies in March and passed out informational brochures focused on seat belts and continued enforcement. In April, BCSO participated in a distracted driving emphasis where deputies also watched for seat belt violations. BCSO Corporals distributed seat belt brochures at convenience stores in the county. Seat belt use held steady March to April (64.1%). Seat belt use decreased April to May by over 3 percentage points. PRG does not have enforcement and publicity activity summaries for May at the writing of this report, so the level of effort put forth for enforcement and publicity are unknown. However, NHTSA’s annual *Click It or Ticket* mobilization was scheduled to begin in May and run through the beginning of June.

Figure 3 includes the number of enforcement hours and the number of citations issued per month. Historical citation data reveal that BCSO wrote 56 seat belt citations in the month of August 2020, and none in September. This could explain why September’s use rate was higher than October’s.

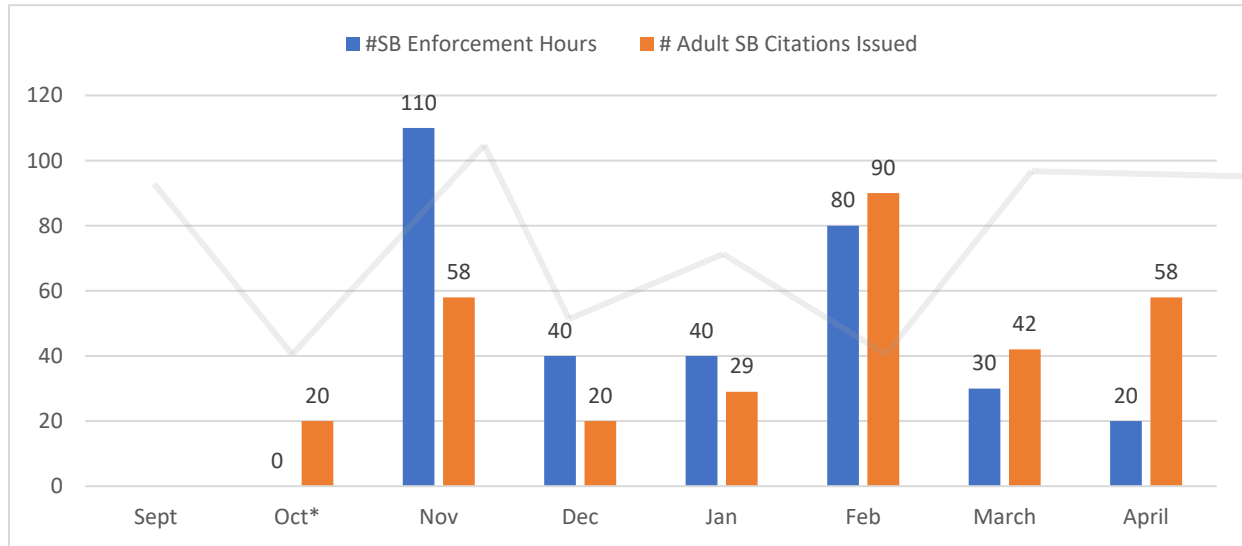


Figure 3. Monthly Enforcement Hours and Citation Totals, BCSO

Results of September’s observational seat belt survey put seat belt use at 63.8%. No seat belt enforcement was reported in September and October’s seat belt observations seem to reflect that by showing a 6-percentage point decrease to 57.8%. In November, BCSO benefitted from National and State seat belt focused publicity promoting the Thanksgiving *Click It or Ticket* (CIOT) mobilization. BCSO conducted 110 hours of seat belt enforcement and wrote 58 seat belt citations for the program. Seat belt use went up 7 percentage points (64.8%) in November. In February, a similar increase was seen but this time there was no help from National and State publicity. BCSO deputies reported working about one-third fewer seat belt enforcement hours and issued about one-third more citations in February than in November and seat belt use increased to a rate comparable to November’s, up 6 percentage points to 64.3%. In March and April, law enforcement distributed brochures at local schools and convenience stores. BCSO participated in a distracted driving grant in April but made it a point to write seat belt citations when a violation was evident. The observed seat belt use rate held steady March (64.3%) to April (64.1%). May’s seat belt use rate decreased to 4 points. Seat belt observations took place May 10-20. It is unknown at the writing of this report what sort of publicity and enforcement activity took place in May. According to NHTSA, enforcement for the National *Click It or Ticket* Mobilization is scheduled for May 24-June 6. The patterns seen in Figures 2 and 3 suggest that increases in seat belt use occur when deputies are seen supporting seat belt use laws – either on the roadway or conducting outreach in the community.

Table 1 below displays the dates of seat belt observations and seat belt enforcement as reported by BCSO. This table can help better understand the timeline of when the observational seat belt surveys were completed and how that measurement relates to when seat belt enforcement was

conducted. Dates of enforcement for December was not reported. An Enforcement Activity Summary for May will be submitted after the writing of this report.

Table 1. Dates of Observational Seat Belt Surveys and Seat Belt Enforcement

| SBO Wave | Date of Seat Belt Observations | Dates of Seat Belt Enforcement (total # citations) |
|------------------|--|---|
| SBO 1 (Baseline) | September 3 rd – 10 th | --- |
| SBO 2 | October 12 th – 14 th | 10/19, 10/22, 10/23, 10/24, 10/25, 10/26 (20) |
| SBO 3 | November 12 th – 18 th | *November 16-29 (58) |
| SBO 4 | December 7 th – 16 th | Not reported (20) |
| SBO 5 | January 4 th – 13 th | 1/16, 1/17, 1/22 (29) |
| SBO 6 | February 10 th – 17 th | 2/1, 2/14, 2/22, 2/27, 2/28 (90) |
| SBO 7 | March 9 th – 16 th | 3/21, 3/29 (42) |
| SBO 8 | April 13 th – 15 th | 4/11 (58) |
| SBO 9 | May 10 th – 20 th | unknown |

*BCSO did not report dates of enforcement for November, but publicity put out by the Idaho Transportation Department state that enforcement was planned November 16-29 statewide.

Figure 4 illustrates seat belt use for county sites and city sites as measured by BCSO and Table 2 provides usage rates for each site type per wave of observation. Note that there are four County sites and two City sites resulting in a larger sample size for the County (N=800) than the City (N=400). A smaller sample size can create greater fluctuations in use rates making it difficult to judge whether the swings (up or down) are significant.

An increase in belt use was measured in the City in April while the usage rate in the County decreased slightly. Now is a good time to ask: did anything happen in March/April to spur a little increase in the City? Were the schools visited by BCSO officers located in the city limits? Were brochures distributed at convenience stores in the city or in the county? Did enforcement occur at certain locations in the city or county? If so, where?

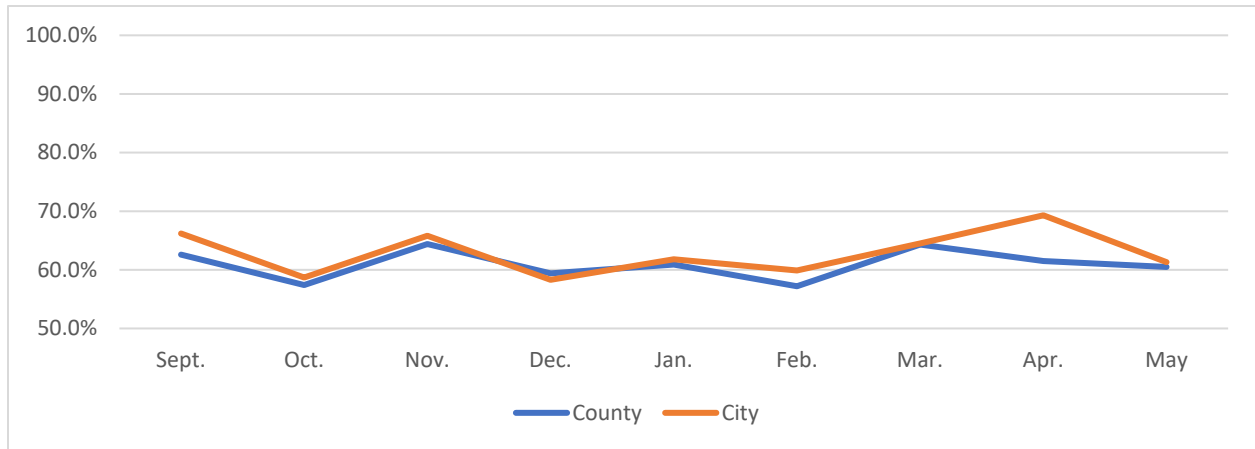


Figure 4. Driver Seat Belt Use by Site Type, * Sept. 2020 – May 2021, BCSO Observational Survey

Table 2. Driver Seat Belt Use Rates by Month and Site Type

| | County | City |
|-------|--------|-------|
| Sept. | 62.6% | 66.2% |
| Oct. | 57.4% | 58.7% |
| Nov. | 64.4% | 65.8% |
| Dec. | 59.4% | 58.3% |
| Jan. | 60.9% | 61.8% |
| Feb. | 57.2% | 59.9% |
| Mar. | 64.3% | 64.5% |
| Apr. | 61.5% | 69.3% |
| May | 60.5% | 61.3% |

*Each observation site is designated either County or City. There are four sites outside Blackfoot city limits and two sites located within Blackfoot city limits.

Table 3 below provides monthly driver seat belt use for each site included in the observational survey conducted by BCSO. The lowest three use rates for each iteration of the observation survey are highlighted in the table below. The three sites with the lowest usage rates continue to be site 2 (Hwy 39 & Hwy 26 Junction in Blackfoot), Site 4 (Hwy 39 & 700W in Riverside), and site 5 (Hwy 39 & Central Avenue in Aberdeen).

Table 3. Driver Seat Belt Use by Month and Site, Observational Surveys Conducted by BCSO

| Site # | Sept. 2020 Baseline | Oct. 2020 | Nov. 2020 | Dec. 2020 | Jan. 2021 | Feb. 2021 | Mar. 2021 | Apr. 2021 | May 2021 |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 1 | 71.4% | 66.0% | 73.0% | 61.0% | 69.5% | 73.9% | 72.5% | 76.5% | 75.5% |
| 2 | 61.0% | 51.5% | 58.5% | 55.5% | 54.0% | 46.0% | 56.5% | 62.0% | 47.0% |
| 3 | 73.5% | 67.0% | 76.0% | 64.0% | 74.5% | 75.5% | 75.5% | 74.0% | 77.5% |
| 4 | 64.5% | 48.5% | 59.0% | 65.0% | 52.0% | 47.2% | 62.0% | 54.0% | 44.0% |
| 5 | 54.0% | 40.5% | 55.5% | 43.0% | 47.0% | 40.0% | 51.0% | 48.5% | 50.0% |
| 6 | 58.5% | 73.7% | 67.0% | 65.5% | 70.0% | 66.0% | 68.5% | 69.5% | 70.5% |
| TOTALS | 63.8% | 57.8% | 64.8% | 59.0% | 61.2% | 58.1% | 64.3% | 64.1% | 60.8% |

Table 4. Site Locations Included in BCSO Observational Seat Belt Survey

| Site# | Site Location |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Hwy 91 & Alice Street (Blackfoot) |
| 2 | Hwy 39 & Hwy 26 Junction (Blackfoot) |
| 3 | Hwy 91 & Fir Street (Shelley) |
| 4 | Hwy 39 & 700 W (Riverside) |
| 5 | Hwy 39 & Central Avenue (Aberdeen) |
| 6 | Hwy 91 & 3 rd Avenue (Fort Hall) |

Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the comparison in seat belt use among Vehicle Types and Sex. Results show that drivers of pickup trucks and male drivers are buckled less often than other groups over every iteration of the survey.

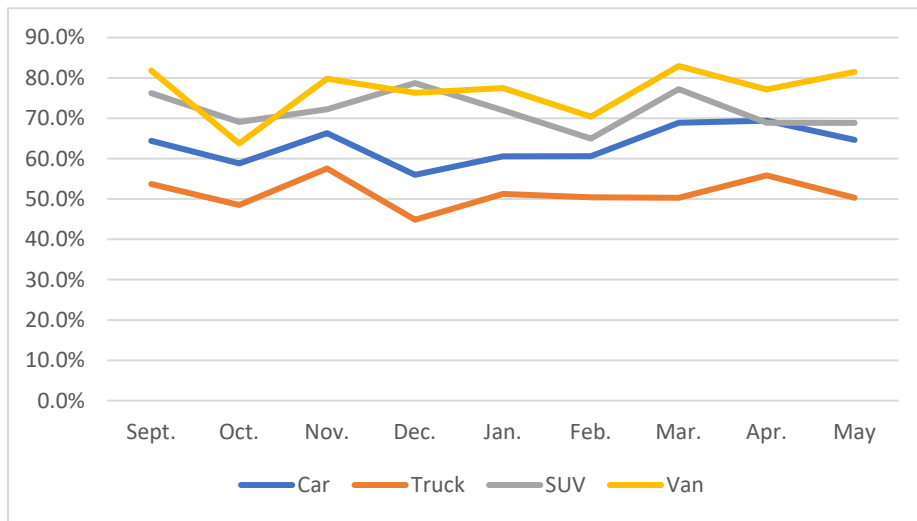


Figure 5. Driver Seat Belt Use by Vehicle Type, Sept. 2020 – May 2021, BCSO Observational Survey

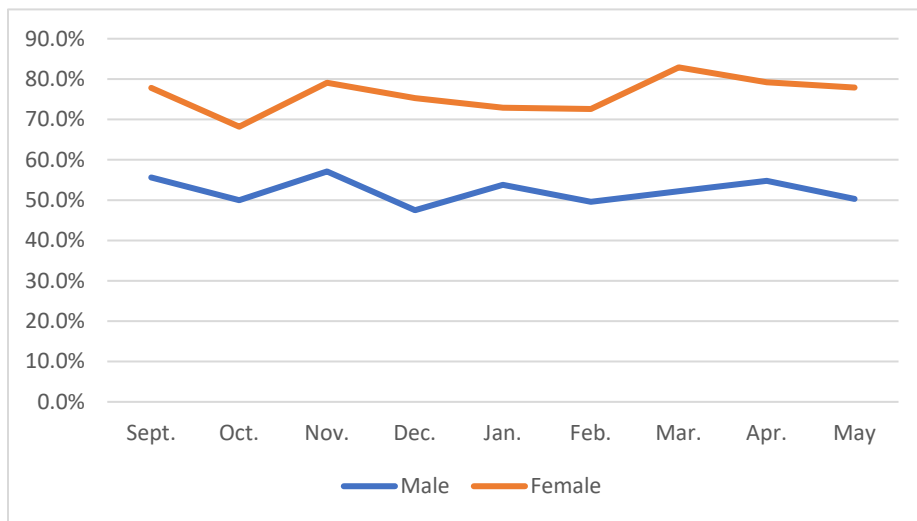


Figure 6. Driver Seat Belt Use by Sex, Sept. 2020 – May 2021, BCSO Observational Survey

BCSO can use the information in this report to help plan enforcement and publicity/outreach activities. Consider the site locations with the lowest belt use rates (Tables 3 and 4) as well as low belt use groups (men, pickup truck drivers) when planning messaging and outreach activities. Informational brochures could be distributed near the low-use site locations and at businesses whose target audience is men and/or pickup truck drivers. BCSO may also consider conducting seat belt enforcement near site locations with the lowest belt use rates.

C2. Interim Summary Report Alexandria Police Department

INTERIM SUMMARY OF PROGRAM AND RESULTS Increasing Seat Belt Use Among Rural Populations

NHTSA Contract/Task Order: DTNH2216D00019/DTNH2217F00176

July 2021

Written for Alexandria Police Department
by
Preusser Research Group, Inc.



PREUSSER
RESEARCH
GROUP, INC.

The intent of this report is to help the Alexandria Police Department (APD) see the effort put forth by the APD for the NHTSA's Rural Seat Belt Demonstration program and to demonstrate how seat belt data be can used to help plan future enforcement and publicity activities. Results in this report are preliminary and should not be considered scientific but can be used to gauge the efforts put forth to date and help APD better estimate the level of effort needed to increase seat belt use as the program period progresses.

Interim Summary of Program and Results November 2020 - June 2021

Project: Increasing Seat Belt Use Among Rural Populations Alexandria Police Department

The Alexandria Police Department (APD) is participating in a seat belt demonstration project sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that aims to increase seat belt use among rural populations. APD has put forth a sustained effort to combat lagging seat belt use in Rapides Parish/Alexandria by conducting dedicated monthly seat belt enforcement, observational seat belt surveys, and publicity for the program. APD was tasked to put health and safety data into publicity and outreach to motivate motorists to buckle up.

APD began sending out press releases for the program in late October 2020 and stepped-up seat belt enforcement started November 9, 2020, a few weeks prior to the National *Click It or Ticket* Mobilization. APD conducted their first complete observational seat belt survey the first week of December 2021.

The last month of the program period is October 2020, three months away. Now is a time to reflect on the efforts that have been put forth over the program period thus far and make a strong push to increase seat belt use in Alexandria and the surrounding rural areas in Rapides Parish.

Summary of APD's Observational Seat Belt Surveys

APD has conducted four observational seat belt surveys since the program began in November 2020. **Total seat belt use (driver and front seat passenger combined) measured 84.2% in May 2021, almost 10 percentage points higher than the usage rate APD measured in December 2020.**

Usage rates for males and pickup trucks showed a large increase from March's survey to May. These groups generally have lower belt use than other groups (i.e., males typically buckle less than females and pickup trucks typically have a lower belt use rate than other vehicle types.) The annual Louisiana statewide Buckle Up in Your Truck program took place in April 2021 followed by the annual *Click It or Ticket* mobilization in May 2021. Enforcement and publicity for these back-to-back events likely helped with the increase in observed seat belt usage measured in May 2021.

Figure 1 illustrates total seat belt use for each iteration of APD's observational seat belt survey. Results for other groups (i.e., sex, vehicle type, site number) are illustrated and discussed in the Appendix. (Note that APD did conduct an observational survey in October 2020, but data was collected from only one site. Results from that October survey are not included in this report.)

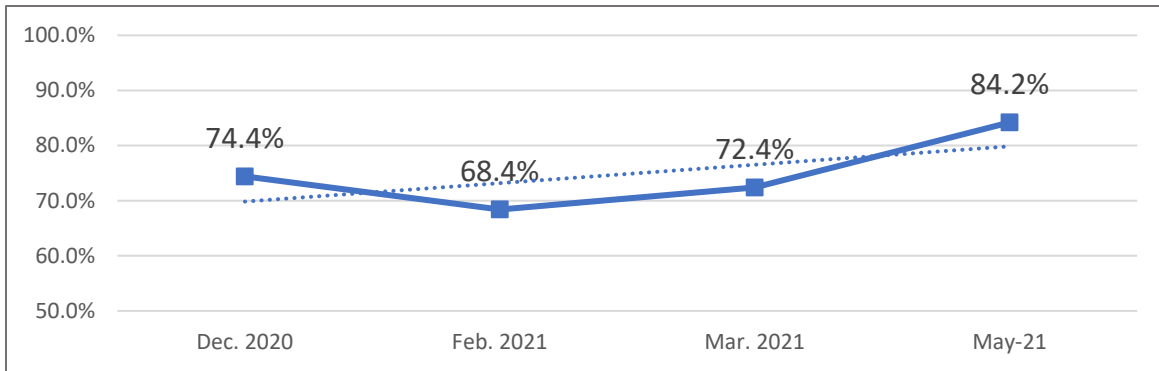


Figure 1. Total Seat Belt Use by Month, APD observational seat belt survey

| | Dec. 2020 | Feb. 2021 | March 2021 | May 2021 |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Total Seat Belt Use | 74.4% N=864 | 68.4% N=728 | 72.4% N=1,170 | 84.2% N=795 |

Summary of Focus Group Findings

Focus groups conducted prior to the start of this program asked a random sample of Alexandria residents about their thoughts and beliefs related to seat belts, seat belt messaging and the seat belt law. Here are some interesting findings from the focus groups that should be considered when planning program activities.

- The top reason given for wearing seat belts was the fear of getting a ticket. People said they buckled because they don't want to break the law and/or they don't want to pay the fine.
- Most participants were not aware that unrestrained crashes have an economic impact on the local community.
- The group was most interested in the following topics related to the economic and societal impacts of not wearing seat belts.
 - 1) the effect a person's death or injury would have on their family/loved ones;
 - 2) how many days a person would not be able to work if they were involved in a crash;
 - 3) the increased cost of insurance and taxes due to unrestrained crashes.
- Local celebrities (e.g., sports figures, the new mayor) and people who had survived a crash or knew someone who had died in a crash were identified as trusted spokespeople to deliver a seat belt message.

Moving Forward

The Rural Seat Belt Demonstration program tasks APD to implement an enforcement and publicity program that focuses on increasing the seat belt use rate in Alexandria/Rapides Parish and results in a decrease in the number of unrestrained crashes on rural roads. NHTSA wants to see if using local health related data in publicity and outreach would help motivate more motorists to buckle up.

The latest observational seat belt survey (May 2021) conducted by APD officers indicate that seat belt use has increased compared to the first survey conducted in December 2020. May's survey was conducted on the heels of two statewide seat belt programs: Buckle Up in Your

Truck (April 2021) and *Click It or Ticket* (May 2021). Seat belt usage measured around 84% in the Alexandria area in May 2021, the highest rate measured by APD in this program period. This is good news, but it shouldn't be forgotten that 84% usage is 6 percentage points lower than the national average of approximately 90%.

Now is the time to take advantage of the wave of increased seat belt use observed by APD in May 2021. Keep the momentum going with lots of publicity and outreach coupled with sustained stepped-up seat belt enforcement. Here are a few recommendations:

- Continue monthly stepped-up seat belt enforcement.
- Publicity & Outreach, Publicity & Outreach, Publicity & Outreach
- Actively recruit community partners – like Buckle Up Louisiana - to help multiply the program message. (<https://www.facebook.com/BuckleUpLouisiana>)
- Tag other safety-minded groups when posting on social media.
- Ask a local celebrity or community leader to publicly support the program's message (e.g., challenge the mayor to post the reason why he wears his seat belt ... "Mayor XXX, tell us why you buckle up! Ask the people you challenge to challenge someone else).
- Ask someone whose life was saved by a seat belt or someone who lost a loved one due to an unrestrained crash to be involved in outreach activities – maybe record a PSA for use on social media.
- Incorporate data related to the costs of not wearing seat belts in publicity and outreach.
- Use #BUCKLEUPRAPIDES when posting about the program

Bulleted data points that can be used to create data driven messages are presented on the fifth page 5 in the Appendix that follows. PRG is available for technical assistance to help with the development and planning of publicity and outreach activities.

Interim Report Rapides Parish - Appendix

Seat Belt Use by Sex and Survey Month

Figure 2 illustrates belt usage of males and females as observed by APD over the course of the program period. Females have held steady and male usage dipped after the December 2020 measurement before making a big increase in May. Male seat belt use actually surpassed female belt use by 1.0 percentage point. The large increase in male belt use was a big contributor to the increase in total belt use.

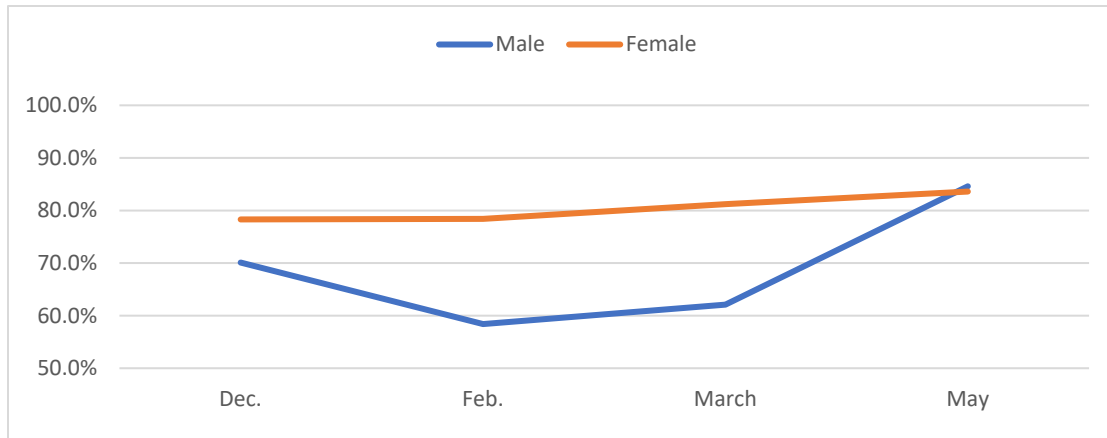


Figure 2. Total Seat Belt Use by Sex, APD Observational Seat Belt Survey

Table 2. Total Usage Rates by Sex and Month*

| | Dec. 2020 | Feb. 2021 | March 2021 | May 2021 |
|--------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Male | 70.1% N=378 | 58.4% N=346 | 62.1% N=541 | 84.6% N=403 |
| Female | 78.3% N=465 | 58.4% N=380 | 81.2% N=628 | 83.6% N=391 |

*Unsure Sex not included.

Seat Belt Use by Vehicle Type and Month

Figure 3 illustrates driver and passenger belt use (total belt use) by vehicle type. Vans make up a small portion of the sample and as a result, there is a lot of fluctuation in use rates. The other vehicle types have a larger Ns and use rates tend to fluctuate less.

Trucks (i.e., pickup trucks) stand out in this graph (Figure 3). Pickup trucks started out with the lowest belt use rate in December 2020 but increased to a rate that is closer to cars and SUVs for the May 2021 measurement. April's statewide Buckle Up in Your Truck program could have helped with the increase in belt usage of pickup trucks.

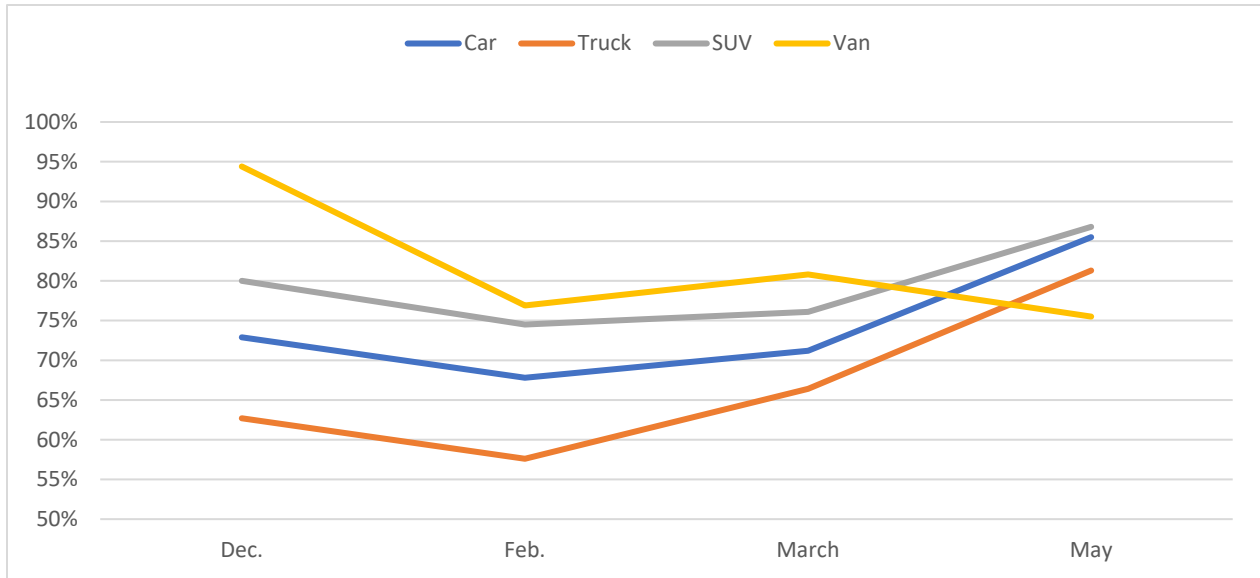


Figure 3. Total Seat Belt Use by Vehicle Type, APD Observational Seat Belt Survey

Table 3. Total Usage Rates by Vehicle Type and Month

| | Dec. 2020 | Feb. 2021 | March 2021 | May 2021 |
|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Car | 72.9% N=339 | 67.8% N=242 | 71.2% N=420 | 85.5% N=289 |
| Truck | 62.7% N=169 | 57.6% N=172 | 66.4% N=262 | 81.3% N=214 |
| SUV | 80.0% N=320 | 74.5% N=275 | 76.1% N=436 | 86.8% N=243 |
| Van | 94.4% N=36 | 76.9% N=39 | 80.8% N=52 | 75.5% N=49 |

Site Locations

Data has been collected from the same three observation points for the surveys discussed in this report. Table 4 provides the designated site number and corresponding observation points used by APD observers. Due to the nature of police work, it could not be guaranteed that the same observer would observe seat belt use for each iteration of the survey. To ensure consistency in data collection, APD observers drew maps of the exact locations where observations took place the first iteration of data collection. APD observers also noted the direction of traffic observed so observations could be replicated each time APD conducted a survey for this program.

Table 4. Observational Survey Sites used in APD Observational Seat Belt Survey

| Site# | Site Location |
|-------|--|
| 1 | LA Hwy 1208-3/Jackson Street @ US Hwy 71/MacArthur Drive |
| 2 | North Mall Drive @ North Boulevard |
| 3 | LA Hwy 1208-3/Jackson Street @ US Hwy 165 Bus./Bolton Avenue |

All sites in APD’s observational survey sites are located within the city limits of Alexandria, LA. The following map illustrates the location and dispersion of survey sites.



Figure 4. Map of Observational Survey Sites, APD Observational Survey

Seat Belt Use by Site Location

Lower belt use was observed at Site 3 (Jackson St. @ Bolton Ave.) for the first three iterations of the survey. Site 3 usage rates increased 24 percentage points on the May 2021 survey, increasing from the lowest observed use rate (57.5%) to a use rate similar to the other two sites (81.5%).

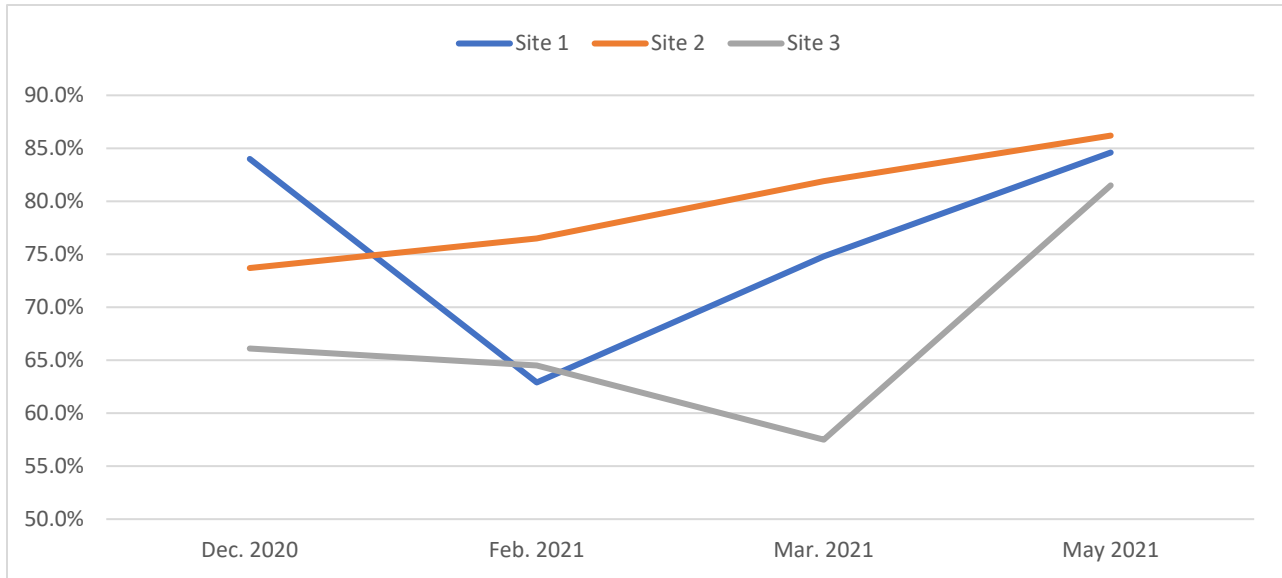


Figure 5. Total Seat Belt Use by Vehicle Site, APD Observational Seat Belt Survey

Table 5. Total Seat Belt Usage Rates by Site

| Site # | Dec. 2020 | Feb. 2021 | March 2021 | May 2021 |
|--------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | 84.0% N=268 | 62.9% N=232 | 74.8% N=568 | 84.6% N=260 |
| 2 | 73.7% N=316 | 76.5% N=268 | 81.9% N=310 | 86.2% N=275 |
| 3 | 66.1% N=280 | 64.5% N=228 | 57.5% N=292 | 81.5% N=260 |

Building a Message

The following statements were put together after considering focus group findings and then mining data related to unrestrained crashes and observational seat belt results. Information was obtained from crash data reports found on the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission website as well as reports published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration³ and BMJ Journal⁴. These statements can be used as is or modified to create content for program materials or other publicity and outreach endeavors.

- In Rapides Parish from 2015-2019, about 62% of drivers in fatal crashes were unrestrained at the time of the crash. If all those drivers had been wearing seat belts, more than half would have survived their injuries.
- Unrestrained occupants *who survive a crash* normally lose more than twice as many workdays than occupants who were buckled at the time of a crash.
- About 60% of fatal crashes occurred on rural roads in Rapides Parish from 2015-2019. Buckling up in the front seat of a passenger car can reduce the risk of moderate to critical injury by 50%.
- In Rapides Parish from 2015-2019, 62% of pickup truck drivers in fatal crashes were not buckled at the time of the crash. Buckling up in a light truck can reduce the risk of moderate to critical injury by 65%.
- The minimum fine for not wearing a seat belt in Louisiana is \$50.
- The death or severe injury of an unbelted occupant in a crash puts a burden on the victim's loved ones and families. Think about those you love and remember to buckle up.
- From 2015-2019 in Rapides Parish, the average cost per death in a motor vehicle accident was about \$1.56 Million; the average cost for each nonfatal injury was about \$47,000; and the average cost for each property damage crash (no injuries) was about \$6,800. The more severe the injury, the higher the cost. Seat belt usage can dramatically reduce injury level and lower the related costs to individuals involved in the crash and local taxpayers.

³ Blincoc, L.J., Miller, T.R., Zaloshnja, E., & Lawrence, B.A. (2015, May). *The economic and societal impact of motor vehicle crashes, 2010. (Revised)* (Report No. DOT HS 812 013). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

⁴ Ebel BE, Mack C, Diehr P, *et al.* Lost working days, productivity, and restraint use among occupants of motor vehicles that crashed in the United States, *Injury Prevention* 2004;**10**:314-319.

Appendix D: Publicity and Infographics Examples

D1. Examples of Publicity and Infographics – Bingham County

Bingham County Publicity

IDAHO

PUBLICITY EXAMPLES

BINGHAM COUNTY BUCKLE UP CAMPAIGN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Date]

CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, E-mail Address]



BINGHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE INFORMS PUBLIC:

BINGHAM COUNTY BUCKLE UP CAMPAIGN STARTS

OCTOBER __, 2020

[Blackfoot, ID]— The Bingham County Sheriff's Office is kicking off a year-long campaign aimed at increasing seat belt use in Bingham County. The program will begin Oct. ____ . The BCSO will work with other law enforcement agencies in the area to enforce Idaho's seat belt law and will also work to inform the community about the negative consequences of not wearing seat belts. This campaign is part of a demonstration project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"The Bingham County Sheriff's Office will be working with law enforcement agencies throughout the county to make sure drivers and passengers in our community are aware of the negative consequences of not wearing a seat belt," said [Local/State Law Enforcement Official]. "A lot of people think that not wearing a seat belt is a decision that only effects the person who chooses to not buckle up. This assumption is incorrect. When a person chooses to not wear a seat belt, he puts other people in the vehicle at risk for injury; and, if he is unbuckled in a crash, he risks putting an added financial burden on his family and the community. We know seat belts save lives but I'm not sure we all realize that seat belts save time and money too. We're telling Bingham County...Don't put your family and community at risk too, buckle up."

The BCSO will be conducting monthly observational seat belt surveys in the county and reporting the use rate to the public. BCSO deputies measured a 65% seat belt use rate in Bingham County in September 2020; more than 25 percentage points below the 2019 national average of 90.7%. _____ says he is "would like people in the community to buckle up and encourage the people they love to buckle up too. I'd like to see the seat belt use rate increase when our deputies go out to measure again next month."

According to the Idaho Department of Transportation, there were 187 fatal and serious injury crashes in Bingham County from 2015-2019. The cost of these crashes was over \$443 million. If everyone had been wearing seat belts, 13 lives and \$147 million could have been saved. 83% of those fatal crashes happened on rural roads.

For more information on seat belt safety in Idaho, please visit www.nhtsa.gov/ciot.

BCSO Rural Seat Belt Program
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, E-mail Address]



***BINGHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE INFORMS
PUBLIC:***

RURAL SEAT BELT PROGRAM STARTS

OCTOBER 19TH

[Blackfoot, ID]— The Bingham County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) is one of two departments in the nation participating a U.S. Department of Transportation demonstration aiming to improve lagging seat belt usage in rural America.

Only 65% of Bingham County drivers and front seat passengers buckle up*, which is 20 percentage points less than the State average, and about 26 percentage points less than the national average.

The year-long demonstration program will request personal responsibility in our pristine community and motorists will be reminded throughout the year that:

- Wearing a seat belt is the single most effective way to protect one's self from more severe injuries when in a crash.
- Life is precious and no one wants the burden of losing friends and family due to a preventable tragedy.
- Preventable injuries cost people, employers, family, and everyone else in the community time and money.

A \$30,000 federal grant will fund the program, paying for the time and materials needed by the BCSO to get the message out. Traffic patrol deputies will also spend time in the community encouraging seat belt usage.

"We've had a few fatalities and severe injuries in the recent past," explains Sgt. XXX with the Bingham County Sheriff's Office, "where seat belt usage would have prevented more severe injuries."

The project will be implemented for twelve consecutive months, so law enforcement asks you to buckle up, and make it a habit.

* Observational seat belt survey conducted by Bingham County Sheriff's Office September 2020

* Idaho Transportation Department's 2019 Observational Survey <https://itd.idaho.gov/safety/>

* National Highway Traffic Safety Administration <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts#>

**BCSO Rural Seat Belt Program
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, E-mail Address]**



***BINGHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE INFORMS
PUBLIC:***

RURAL SEAT BELT PROGRAM IN PROGRESS

June 2021

[Blackfoot, ID]— The Bingham County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) is participating in a project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation that focuses on improving seat belt use in rural America. The USDOT reports that while only 19% of the U.S. population lives in rural areas, almost half of all highway fatalities occur on rural roads. Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) data indicate that in Bingham County from 2015-2019, 83% of fatal crashes occurred on rural roads. The ITD estimates that the cost of fatal and serious injury crashes in Bingham County was over \$443 million over that same five-year period. Bingham County residents pay through insurance premiums, taxes, direct out of pocket payments for goods and services, and increased charges for medical care.

The BCSO has been conducting monthly observational seat belt surveys throughout Bingham County for the past six months and results show that drivers are wearing their seat belts only about 65% of the time. Their observations indicate that the groups that wear their seat belts the least are males and drivers of pickup trucks.

Unbuckled motorists have the potential to create unnecessary costs to the community. The BCSO is asking for motorists in the community to take personal responsibility and buckle up. BCSO would like for motorists in Bingham County to remember these important things:

- Wearing a seat belt is the single most effective way to protect oneself from more severe injuries when in a crash.
- Life is precious and no one wants the burden of losing friends, family and/or quality of life due to a preventable tragedy.
- Preventable injuries cost people, employers, family, and everyone else in the community time and money.

BCSO traffic patrol deputies have been encouraging seat belt use throughout Bingham County and will continue to observe and monitor seat belt use for the next few months. Sgt. XXX with the Bingham County Sheriff's Office has been in charge of the #BuckleUpBingham program and has been monitoring use rates. Sgt. XXX said he'd "like to see seat belt use reach 100% in Bingham County." He asks that everyone buckle up and make it a habit.

December 2020 Social Media for Rural Seat Belt Program – Bingham County, ID



Seat belt use in Bingham County was measured at 66% in November.

Are you one of the 34% not buckled?

Buckle Up Bingham!

Before hitting the road for the holidays, keep this in mind: 83% of fatal crashes in Bingham County occur on rural roads. Seat belts drastically reduce your chances of dying in a car crash. Keep yourself and your family safe.

Buckle Up Bingham!

Data Source: Idaho Transportation Department

**Santa buckles...
so should you!**



#BuckleUpBingham!

ITD reports that using safety restraints reduces fatalities by 74% in rollover crashes involving passenger cars.

74%

Protect yourself, protect your family. Buckle up!



Safety restraints reduce fatalities by 80%* in rollover crashes involving light trucks. In Bingham County, light truck occupants wear a seat belt only 54% of the time.** This means many of you are putting yourself at risk. Your family depends on you so please...

**Buckle Up
Bingham!**

*Idaho Transportation Department

**Preusser Research Group Observational Seat Belt Survey Sept. 2020

*Idaho Transportation Department

**Preusser Research Group Observational Seat Belt Survey Sept. 2020

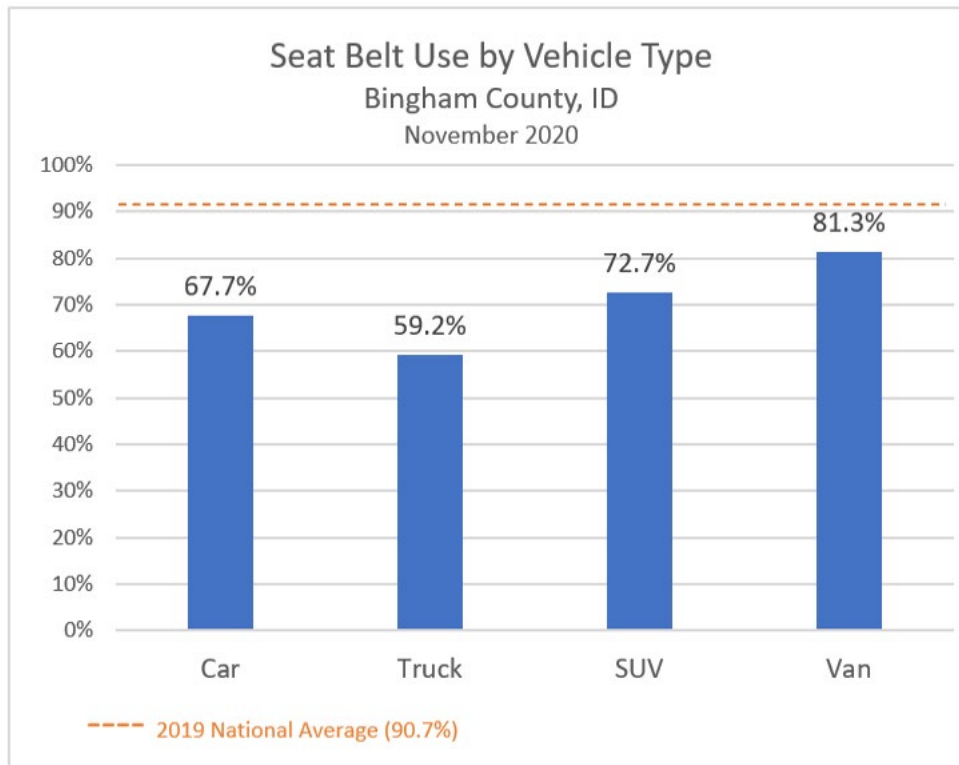


#BuckleUpBingham

(If answer doesn't appear, click arrow)

Your seat belt can hurt you in a crash. Myth or Real Deal?

Real Deal. In a crash, everything in your car can cause bodily harm, but your seat belt is one of the few things that can actually save you.



Source: Bingham County Sheriff's Office November 2020 Observational Seat Belt Survey

Idaho Transportation Department Video. This can be posted on BCSO FB page and/or website:

<https://youtu.be/nQUNHpZ3Vis>

**RURAL SEAT BELT PROGRAM
SOCIAL MEDIA SCHEDULE
FEBRUARY 2021**

NOTE: Social media posts should be made at the beginning of the week

Week 1 - ENFORCEMENT-CENTERED MESSAGE

- Come up with your own enforcement-centered message or copy and paste the blue text below to embed an enforcement-centered video from NHTSA on your Facebook page, website and/or other social media platform(s). (Note: This video can also be provided to tv outlets. For a broadcast-quality spot, please contact NHTSA's Office of Communications and Consumer Information at (202) 366-9550.)

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/cLP3i84uMr4>

- Remember to tag community partners
- Include **#BuckleUpBingham** in the post

Week 2 – ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

- Upload video or picture of a local law enforcement officer buckling up and saying something like “I buckle because I know it can save my life. Mayor XXX, why do you buckle?”
- In the comments of the post, tag the person mentioned in the video (Mayor, friend, teacher, principal, first responder, etc.). Or if posting a picture instead of a video, include in the comments below the pic a challenge to someone in the community to post the reason(s) they buckle. Tag that person in the post and other community partners. Use program hashtags. Encourage everyone to keep it going.
- Video or picture can be made using an Android or iPhone and uploaded from the phone.
- Examples of other reasons that might be used for buckling:
 - I want to be a good example for _____
 - I don't want my family to have to take care of me if I'm injured in a crash
 - I don't want to break the law
 - It helps our community save money
 - I want to be healthy for work tomorrow because I need a paycheck
 - My mom/dad/wife/husband/boss/kid/friend asked me to
 - I look good wearing it
 - My mom/dad/wife/husband/sister/brother/ would kill me if I didn't
 - I don't like to hear my car dinging

Week 3 - OBSERVATIONAL SEAT BELT SURVEY RESULTS

- Seat belt use was measured at 61.2% in January 2021, 3.8 percentage points below the baseline use rate of 65% measured in September 2020.

**Seat belt use in Bingham County
measured 65% in September 2020 and
dropped to 61% in January 2021.**

Are you one of the 39% not buckled?

#BuckleUpBingham!

Week 4 - HEALTH-RELATED STATISTIC

- Post health-related stat provided by Preusser Research Group, Inc.
- 83% of fatal crashes occurred on rural roads in Bingham County from 2015-2019. Seat belts drastically reduce your chances of dying in a car crash. Protect yourself, protect your family. #BuckleUpBingham!

83% of fatal crashes occurred on rural roads
in Bingham County from 2015-2019. Seat
belts drastically reduce your chances of
dying in a car crash.
Protect yourself, protect the ones you love.
#BuckleUpBingham!

**RURAL SEAT BELT PROGRAM
SOCIAL MEDIA SCHEDULE
MARCH 2021**

NOTE: Social media posts should be made at the beginning of the week if possible

Week 1 - ENFORCEMENT-CENTERED MESSAGE

Remind the community that BCSO is keeping a keen eye out for seat belt use. The goal is to increase seat belt usage in order to keep the community safe.

- Remember to tag community partners in your post
- Include **#BuckleUpBingham** in the post

Week 2 – ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

Start a conversation with BCSO Facebook followers by posting this question. Allow time for responses, then post the answer.

How much, on average, does a serious injury crash cost the Bingham County community?

Answer: The Idaho Transportation Department estimates that in Bingham County from 2015-2019, the average cost to the community for each serious injury crash was about \$470,000, and minor injury crashes about \$128,000. The more severe the injury, the higher the cost. Costs include insurance premiums, taxes, medical care, and other direct out of pocket payments.

Week 3 - OBSERVATIONAL SEAT BELT SURVEY RESULTS

Post results from the observational seat belt survey to try and motivate the community to engage with the effort to increase seat belt use.

- Results from a monthly observational seat belt survey in Bingham County showed that seat belt usage was 58% in February 2021, 7.0 percentage points below the baseline use rate of 65% measured in September 2020. We can do better! #BuckleUpBingham!


Week 4 - HEALTH-RELATED STATISTIC

Post a health-related statistic specific to Bingham County

- Over the last five years in Bingham County, about 71% of occupants in fatal crashes were NOT BUCKLED at the time of the crash. If all those who died in a crash had been wearing a seat belt, more than half would still be alive today. Protect yourself, protect those you love. #BuckleUpBingham!

Brochure

The Bingham County Sheriff's Office is one of two departments in the nation participating in a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration demonstration project aiming to improve lagging seat belt usage in rural America. The year-long program requests help from you in the form of personal responsibility.




Bingham County law enforcement is dedicated to keeping our citizens safe. One way to do this is to ensure *everyone* wears a seat belt *every trip, every time*.

Information in this brochure is meant to increase awareness about the seat belt problem in Bingham County and motivate the community to help us **Buckle Up Bingham!**

There are GOOD REASONS to wear a seat belt.


Protect yourself.

Wearing a seat belt is the single most effective way to protect one's self from more severe injuries when in a crash.




Protect your family.

Life is precious and no one wants the burden of losing friends and family due to a preventable injury.



Protect your pocketbook.

Seat belts reduce the injury level sustained in a crash. The more severe the injury, the higher the cost to the individual AND the community.



How you can help...

- 1** Fasten your seat belt before every trip, no matter how far the drive.
- 2** Ensure everyone in your vehicle is belted every trip, every time.

Email Sgt. Gary Yancey at the BCSO to schedule someone to speak to your group about seat belt safety or find out how you can become a seat belt safety advocate.
gjyancey@co.bingham.id.us

- 3** Share a picture on Facebook of you and/or someone you love wearing a seat belt. Tag BCSO and use the hashtag:

#BuckleUpBingham

Seat belt use saves money. Bingham County residents share the burden of crash costs through increased insurance premiums, taxes, direct out-of-pocket payments for goods and services, and increased charges for medical care.


| Injury Type | Average Cost |
|--------------------|--------------|
| No Apparent Injury | \$3,310 |
| Minor Injury | \$127,959 |
| Serious Injury | \$469,801 |
| Fatal Injury | \$9,823,333 |

In addition, unbelted occupants who survive a crash typically lose **MORE THAN TWICE** as many workdays than occupants who were buckled in a crash. **Keep your money in your pocket and Buckle Up!**


From 2015-2019, 83% of fatal crashes* in Bingham County occurred on rural roads.

About 71% of occupants in **fatal** crashes* in Bingham County were **NOT BUCKLED** at the time of the crash. If all those who died in a crash had been wearing a seat belt, *more than half would still be alive today.*

Bingham County Sheriff's Office



Buckle Up Bingham!



*Reportable passenger motor vehicle crashes, years 2015-2019
Data source: Idaho Transportation Department

#BuckleUpBingham

Bingham County Sheriff's Office
 501 N. Maple Street, #405
 Blackfoot, ID 83221
 208-785-4440

Rural Seat Belt Program

Sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Photo by Tyler Keith

D2. Examples of Publicity and Infographics – Rapides Parish

Rapides Parish Publicity

December 2020 Social Media for Rural Seat Belt Program – Rapides Parish, LA



Seat belt use in Rapides Parish was measured at 74% in December 2020.

Are you one of the 26% not buckled?

#BuckleUpRapides!

Data Source: Alexandria Police Department observational survey (Dec. 2020)

Before hitting the road for the holidays, keep this in mind: about 60% of fatal crashes in Rapides Parish occur on rural roads. Seat belts drastically reduce your chances of dying in a car crash. Keep yourself and your family safe.



Buckle Up Rapides!



Data Source: Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, Data Reports (2015-2019)

Santa buckles...

so should you!

#BuckleUpRapides

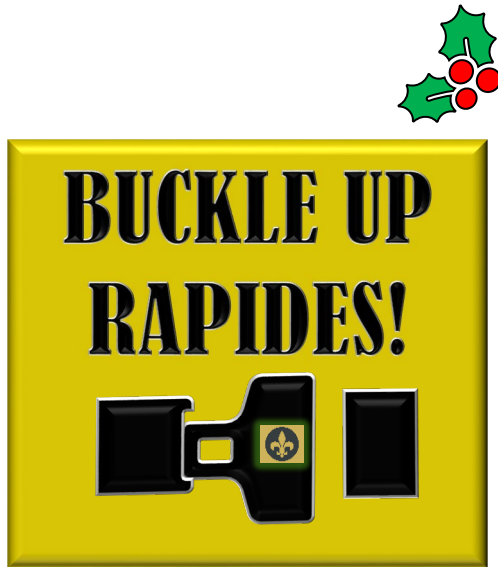


Buckling up in a light truck can reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60%.

60%

Protect yourself, protect your family. Buckle up!

Data Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2015)



In Rapides Parish from 2015-2019, about 62% of drivers in fatal crashes were not wearing a seat belt at the time of the crash. If all those drivers had been wearing a seat belt, more than half would have survived their injuries. Your family depends on you so please...

Data Source: Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, Data Reports (2015-2019)



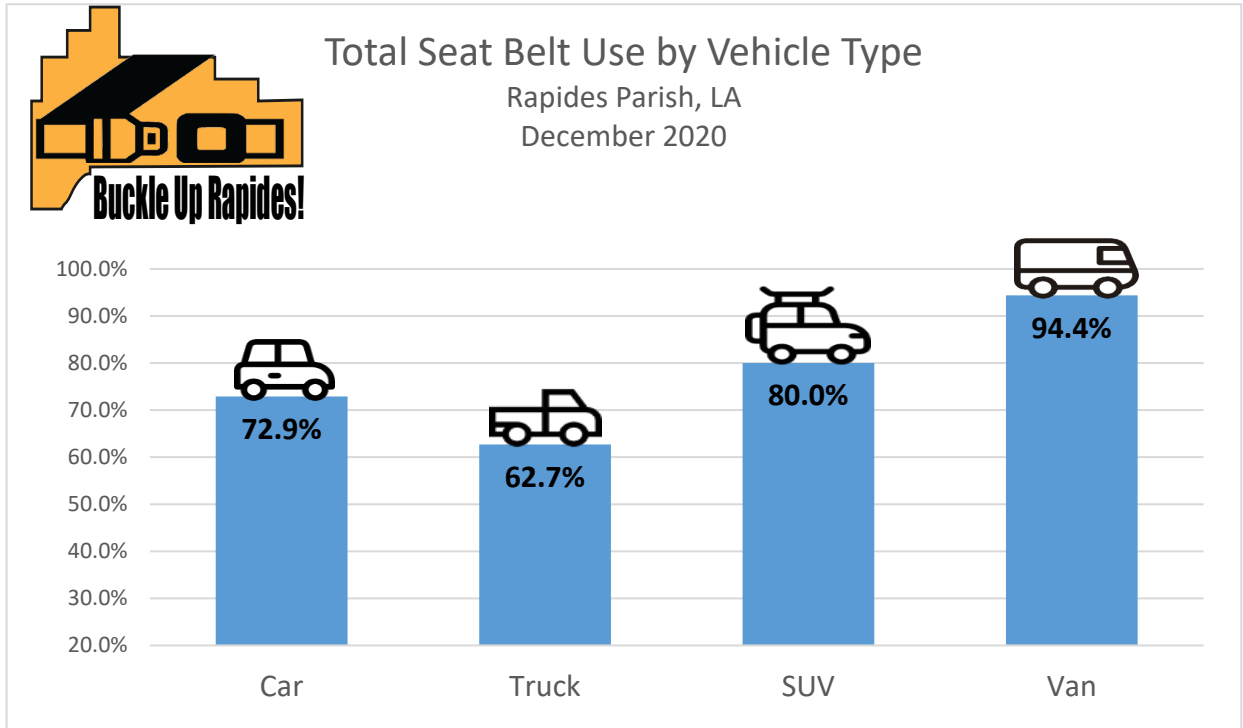
**Buckle Up
Rapides!**

#BuckleUpRapides

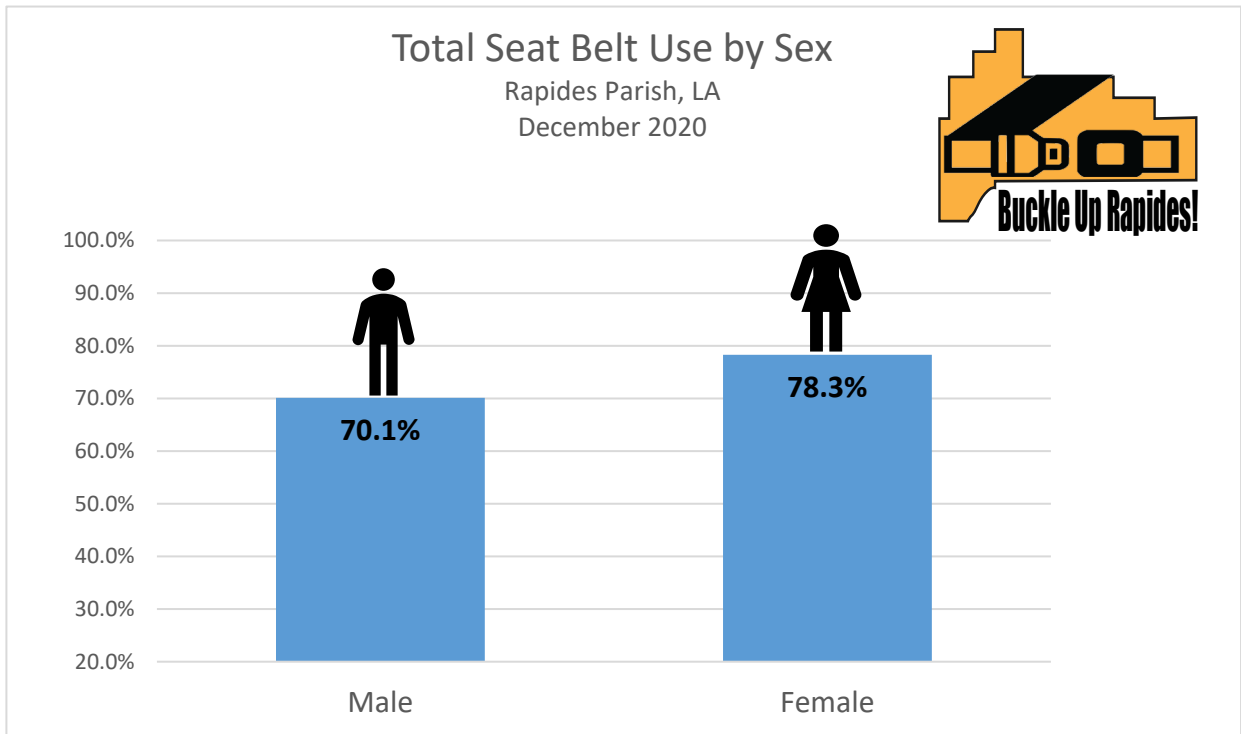
(Click arrow for answer)

Your seat belt can hurt you in a crash. Myth or Real Deal?

Real Deal. In a crash, everything in your car can cause bodily harm, but your seat belt is one of the few things that can actually save you.



Data Source: Alexandria Police Department observational survey (Dec. 2020)



Data Source: Alexandria Police Department observational survey (Dec. 2020)

Thanksgiving Social Media for Rural Seat Belt Program – Rapides Parish, LA



Before hitting the road for Thanksgiving festivities, keep this in mind: about 60% of fatal crashes in Rapides Parish occur on rural roads. Seat belts drastically reduce your chances of dying in a car crash. Keep yourself and your family safe.

Buckle up, Rapides!



**Seat belt use in Rapides Parish was
measured at 77% in October.**

Buckle Up, Rapides!

THANKSGIVING TIPS



DON'T BRING UP POLITICS AT THE DINNER TABLE
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY
BUCKLE UP. EVERY TRIP. EVERY TIME.



Buckling up in a light truck can reduce the risk of moderate to critical injury by 65%. In Rapides Parish, only 54% of light truck passengers wear a seat belt. This means many of you are putting yourself at risk. Your family depends on you so please...

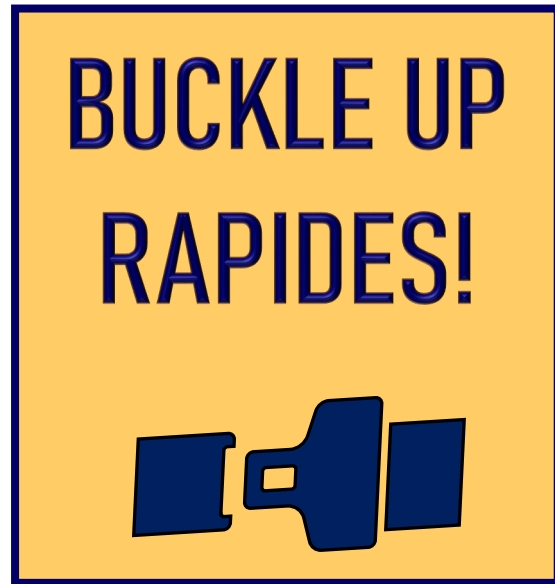
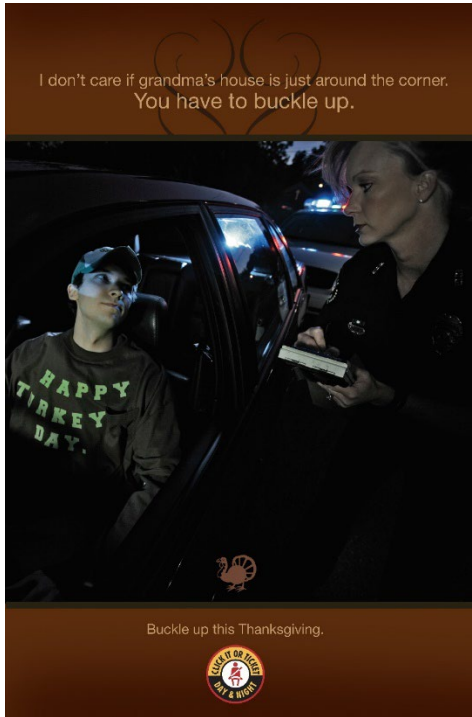
Buckle up!



**Fasten Your Seatbelt or
the Turkey Won't Make it!**



Are you one of the 23% not buckled?



(Click arrow for answer)

If you're not going far or not traveling fast, seat belts are unnecessary. [Myth or Real Deal?](#)

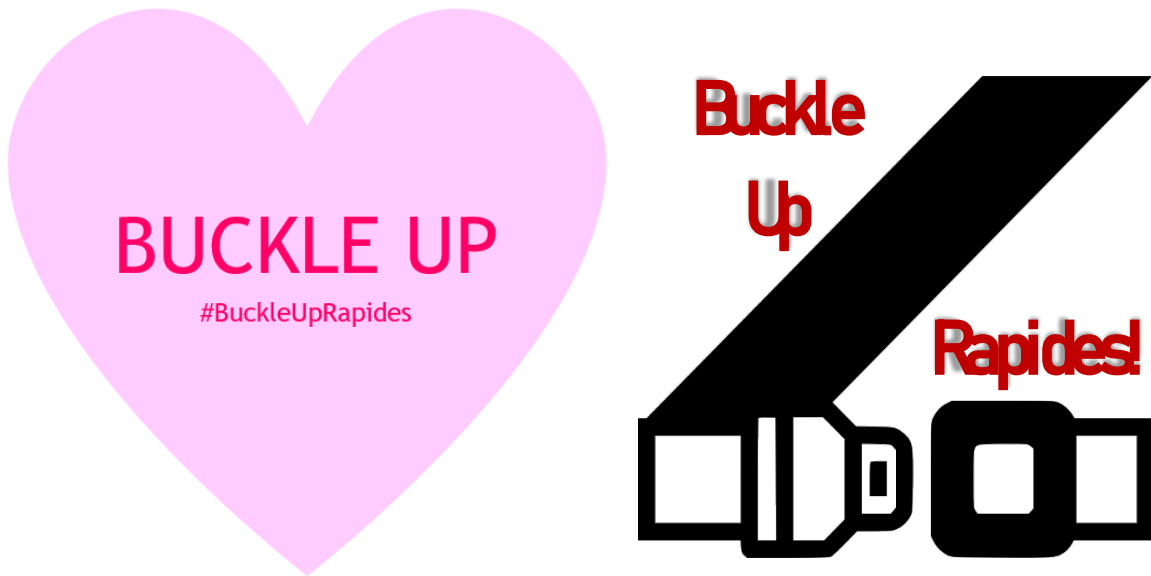
Myth. Seemingly routine trips can be deceptively dangerous. Most fatal crashes happen within 25 miles from home and at speeds of less than 40 mph.

The reports that only 56% light truck
Occupants in fatalities were wearing **56%**
Their seat belt.

Protect yourself, protect your family.

**RURAL SEAT BELT PROGRAM
SOCIAL MEDIA SCHEDULE
FEBRUARY 2021**

Observational Survey prior to (or around) Valentine's Day



February 14-20 - OBSERVATIONAL SEAT BELT SURVEY RESULTS

- Seat belt use was measured at 68.4% in February 2021, 6.0 percentage points below November's use rate.

Seat belt use in Rapides Parish was measured at 68.4% in December 2020.

Are you one of the 32% not buckled?

Buckle Up, Rapides!

February 21-27 – ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

- Upload a short video or picture of a local law enforcement officer buckling up and saying something like “I buckle because I know it can save my life. [Mayor XXX or Sgt. XXX] why do you buckle?”
- In the comments of the post, tag the person mentioned in the video (Mayor, friend, teacher, principal, first responder, etc.). Or if posting a picture instead of a video, include in the comments below the pic a challenge to someone in the community to post the reason(s) they buckle. Tag that person in the post and other community partners. Use program hashtags. Encourage everyone to keep it going.
- Video or picture can be made using an Android or iPhone and uploaded from the phone.
- Examples of other reasons that might be used for buckling:
 - I want to be a good example for _____.
 - I don’t want my family to have to take care of me if I’m injured in a crash.
 - I don’t want to break the law.
 - It helps our community save money.
 - I want to be healthy for work tomorrow because I need a paycheck.
 - My mom/dad/wife/husband/boss/kid/friend asked me to.
 - I look good wearing it.
 - My mom/dad/wife/husband/sister/brother/ would kill me if I didn’t wear it.
 - I don’t like to hear my car dinging!

February 28 – March 6 - HEALTH-RELATED STATISTIC

- Post health-related stat provided by PRG

60% of fatal crashes in Rapides Parish occur on rural roads. Feeling lucky?

#BuckleUpRapides! 

December 2020 Social Media for Rural Seat Belt Program – Rapides Parish



Seat belt use in Rapides Parish was measured at 74% in December 2020.

Are you one of the 26% not buckled?

#BuckleUpRapides!

Data Source: Alexandria Police Department observational survey (Dec. 2020)

Before hitting the road for the holidays, keep this in mind: about 60% of fatal crashes in Rapides Parish occur on rural roads. Seat belts drastically reduce your chances of dying in a car crash. Keep yourself and your family safe.



Buckle Up Rapides!



Data Source: Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, Data Reports (2015-2019)

Santa buckles...

so should you!

#BuckleUpRapides!

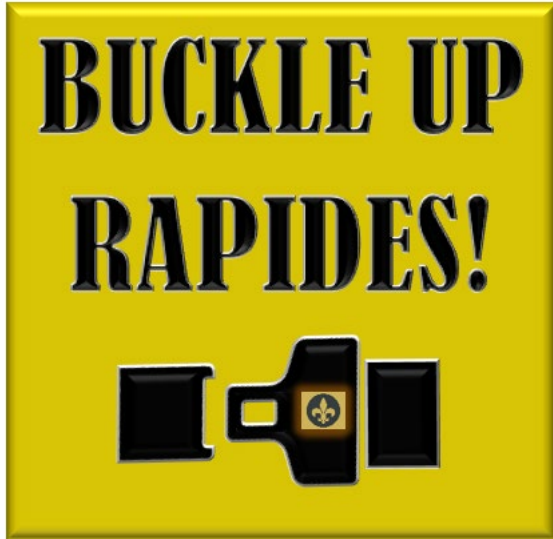


Buckling up in a light truck can reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60%.

60%

Protect yourself, protect your family. Buckle up!

Data Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2015)



In Rapides Parish from 2015-2019, about 62% of drivers in fatal crashes were not wearing a seat belt at the time of the crash. If all those drivers had been wearing a seat belt, more than half would have survived their injuries. Your family depends on you so please...



**Buckle Up
Rapides!**

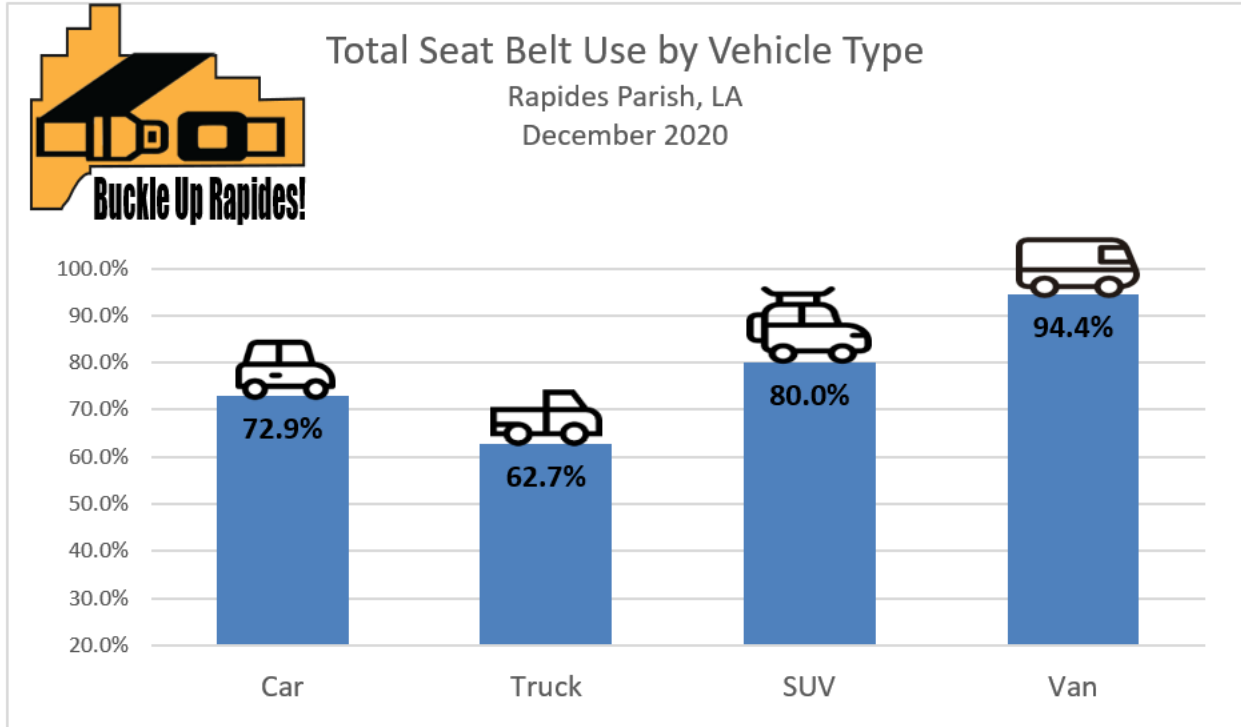


Data Source: Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, Data Reports (2015-2019)

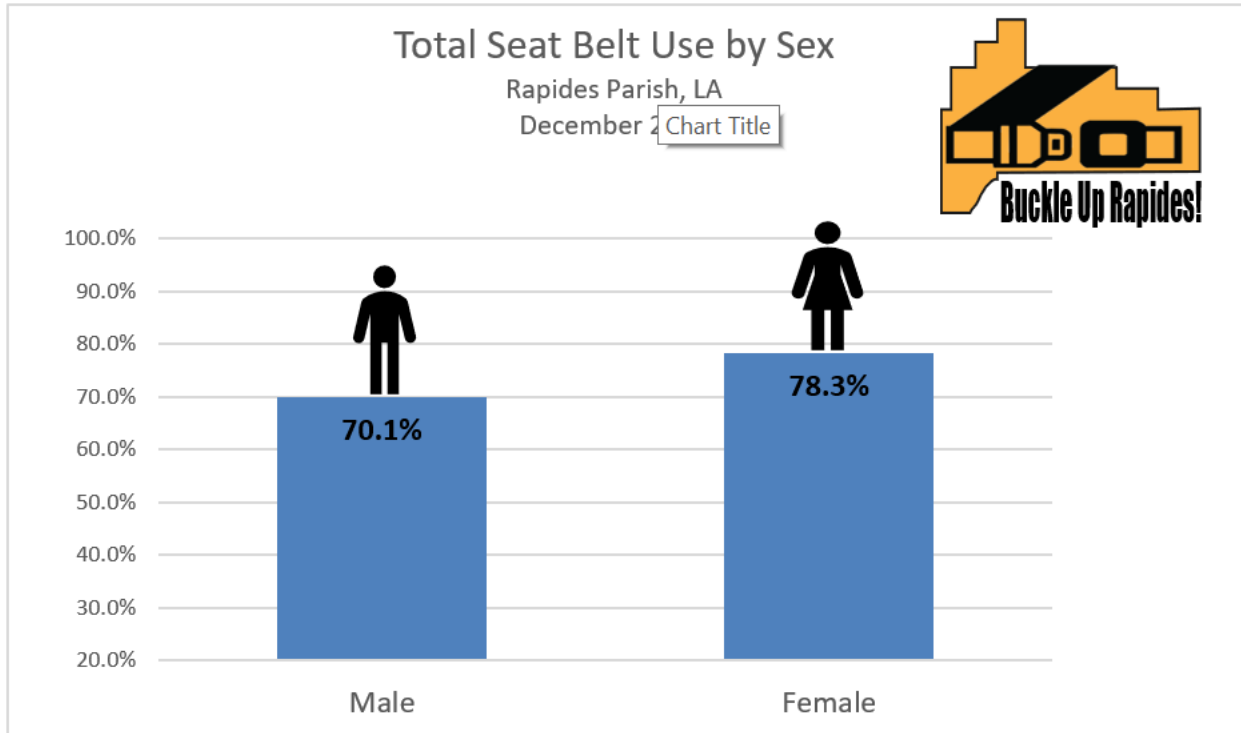
#BuckleUpRapides

Your seat belt can hurt you in a crash. Myth or Real Deal?

Real Deal. In a crash, everything in your car can cause bodily harm, but your seat belt is one of the few things that can actually save you.



Data Source: Alexandria Police Department observational survey (Dec. 2020)



Data Source: Alexandria Police Department observational survey (Dec. 2020)

December 9, 2020

APD Rural Seat Belt Program
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, E-mail Address]



TO:

FROM: Sgt. XXX and Sgt. XXX
Alexandria Police Department

RE: **Buckle Up Rapides Seat Belt Program**

The Alexandria Police Department (APD) is spearheading a countywide effort to increase seat belt use in the community. The **Buckle Up Rapides** program is part of a NHTSA-sponsored project focused on increasing seat belt use in rural areas. APD has been tasked to help develop a local program using data-driven publicity and sustained enforcement to increase seat belt use in Rapides Parish.

A few facts:

- APD officers conducted an observational survey of seat belt use in December 2020. Results showed that about **26% of front seat passenger vehicle occupants were NOT BUCKLED.**
- Data from the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission indicate that **60% of fatal crashes occurred on rural roads** from 2015-2019 in Rapides Parish.
- Preusser Research Group conducted focus groups with Rapides Parish residents to learn more about attitudes, opinions, and behaviors regarding seat belt use in the community. Participants let us know that they **pay attention to messaging about seat belts. Participants were familiar with *Click It or Ticket* and Seat Belt Awareness Month and expected to see and hear seat belt related messages in publicity and outreach.**

In short:

Many people driving on Rapides Parish roads are not buckling up. This behavior puts many members of our community at risk for fatal and/or severe injury. Law enforcement and other safety-minded organizations can help increase seat belt use by encouraging the public to buckle up using publicity and outreach.

Together We Can #BuckleUpRapides!

What you can do:

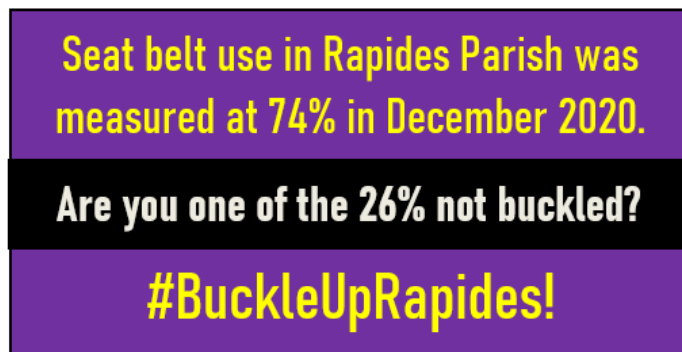
Law enforcement officers and other safety-minded organizations or individuals in Rapides Parish are encouraged to multiply the message through word-of-mouth, social media, and/or outreach. If you have ideas about how to get the #BuckleUpRapides message out efficiently and effectively, please **contact Sgt. XXX or Sgt. XXX at the Alexandria Police Department**. In addition, law enforcement officers throughout Rapides Parish are asked to keep a keen eye out for seat belt violators.

The graphics below can be copied and uploaded to social media platforms or on your agency's website. Other materials like seat belt myths & facts, trivia questions, and graphic images can be found using the links below. Remember to use the hashtag **#BuckleUpRapides** when posting on social media platforms or websites and tag APD and other safety-focused organizations and/or individuals. Let's get the word out!

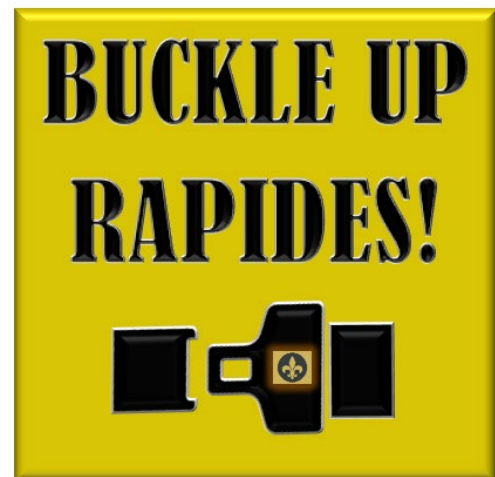
NHTSA: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts>

NHTSA's traffic safety marketing: <https://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/seat-belts>

Louisiana Highway Safety Commission:
<https://www.lahighwaysafety.org/>



Data Source: Alexandria Police Department observational survey (Dec. 2020)



Appendix E: Model Specifications and Regression Outputs

E1. Model Specifications and Regression Outputs – Bingham County

Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location

| Variables in the Equation | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------|------|---------|----|------|--------|---------------------|-------|
| | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for EXP(B) | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Step 1 ^a | WAVE(1) | -.251 | .088 | 8.221 | 1 | .004 | .778 | .655 | .924 |
| | Site_Type(1) | .188 | .076 | 6.129 | 1 | .013 | 1.207 | 1.040 | 1.400 |
| | Site_Type(1) by WAVE(1) | -.063 | .117 | .294 | 1 | .588 | .939 | .747 | 1.180 |
| | Constant | -1.324 | .055 | 574.128 | 1 | .000 | .266 | | |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: WAVE, Site_Type, Site_Type * WAVE .

Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location, by Sex

| Variables in the Equation | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------|------|---------|------|--------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| D_KnSex | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for EXP(B) | | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper | |
| Male | Step 1 ^a | WAVE(1) | -.320 | .106 | 9.158 | 1 | .002 | .726 | .590 | .893 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | .295 | .091 | 10.393 | 1 | .001 | 1.343 | 1.123 | 1.607 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by WAVE(1) | -.014 | .141 | .009 | 1 | .923 | .987 | .749 | 1.299 |
| | | Constant | -1.043 | .066 | 252.551 | 1 | .000 | .352 | | |
| Female | Step 1 ^a | WAVE(1) | -.069 | .162 | .184 | 1 | .668 | .933 | .679 | 1.282 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | .083 | .144 | .331 | 1 | .565 | 1.087 | .819 | 1.442 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by WAVE(1) | -.277 | .219 | 1.598 | 1 | .206 | .758 | .494 | 1.165 |
| | | Constant | -1.880 | .107 | 309.769 | 1 | .000 | .153 | | |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: WAVE, Site_Type, Site_Type * WAVE.

Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location, by Age Group

| Variables in the Equation | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------|------|---------|----|------|--------|--------------------|-------|
| D_Age | | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I.for EXP(B) | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| 16-34 | Step 1 ^a | WAVE(1) | -.626 | .211 | 8.775 | 1 | .003 | .535 | .353 | .809 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | -.302 | .202 | 2.231 | 1 | .135 | .740 | .498 | 1.099 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by WAVE(1) | .355 | .257 | 1.907 | 1 | .167 | 1.426 | .862 | 2.360 |
| | | Constant | -1.026 | .178 | 33.343 | 1 | .000 | .358 | | |
| 35-59 | Step 1 ^a | WAVE(1) | -.032 | .118 | .073 | 1 | .788 | .969 | .769 | 1.220 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | .415 | .100 | 17.363 | 1 | .000 | 1.514 | 1.246 | 1.840 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by WAVE(1) | -.355 | .159 | 4.956 | 1 | .026 | .701 | .513 | .958 |
| | | Constant | -1.347 | .066 | 418.942 | 1 | .000 | .260 | | |
| 60+ | Step 1 ^a | WAVE(1) | -.549 | .214 | 6.610 | 1 | .010 | .577 | .380 | .878 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | .096 | .168 | .324 | 1 | .569 | 1.100 | .792 | 1.530 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by WAVE(1) | .243 | .274 | .787 | 1 | .375 | 1.275 | .746 | 2.180 |
| | | Constant | -1.374 | .124 | 122.007 | 1 | .000 | .253 | | |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: WAVE, Site_Type, Site_Type * WAVE.

Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location, by Road

| Variables in the Equation | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------|------|---------|----|------|--------|--------------------|-------|
| City_NonCity | | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I.for EXP(B) | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| City | Step 1 ^a | WAVE(1) | -.222 | .130 | 2.938 | 1 | .087 | .801 | .621 | 1.032 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | .363 | .109 | 11.075 | 1 | .001 | 1.437 | 1.161 | 1.780 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by WAVE(1) | -.233 | .171 | 1.865 | 1 | .172 | .792 | .567 | 1.107 |
| | | Constant | -1.399 | .080 | 304.575 | 1 | .000 | .247 | | |
| Non-City | Step 1 ^a | WAVE(1) | -.284 | .119 | 5.696 | 1 | .017 | .752 | .596 | .950 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | .023 | .106 | .047 | 1 | .829 | 1.023 | .831 | 1.259 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by WAVE(1) | .101 | .160 | .397 | 1 | .529 | 1.106 | .808 | 1.514 |
| | | Constant | -1.252 | .076 | 269.448 | 1 | .000 | .286 | | |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: WAVE, Site_Type, Site_Type * WAVE.

E2. Model Specifications and Regression Outputs – Rapides Parish

Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location

| Variables in the Equation | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------|------|----------|----|------|--------|---------------------|-------|
| | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for EXP(B) | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Step 1 ^a | Wave(1) | -.234 | .085 | 7.524 | 1 | .006 | .792 | .670 | .935 |
| | Site_Type(1) | -.017 | .073 | .052 | 1 | .819 | .983 | .852 | 1.135 |
| | Site_Type(1) by Wave(1) | .348 | .112 | 9.636 | 1 | .002 | 1.416 | 1.137 | 1.764 |
| | Constant | -1.780 | .050 | 1260.481 | 1 | .000 | .169 | | |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Wave, Site_Type, Site_Type * Wave.

Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location, by Sex

| Variables in the Equation | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------|------|---------|------|--------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| D_KnownSex | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for EXP(B) | | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper | |
| Male | Step 1 ^a | Wave(1) | -.135 | .109 | 1.537 | 1 | .215 | .874 | .706 | 1.081 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | .143 | .094 | 2.337 | 1 | .126 | 1.154 | .960 | 1.386 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by Wave(1) | .215 | .141 | 2.322 | 1 | .128 | 1.239 | .940 | 1.633 |
| | | Constant | -1.620 | .066 | 593.481 | 1 | .000 | .198 | | |
| Female | Step 1 ^a | Wave(1) | -.419 | .140 | 9.010 | 1 | .003 | .657 | .500 | .865 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | -.299 | .120 | 6.205 | 1 | .013 | .741 | .586 | .938 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by Wave(1) | .535 | .190 | 7.932 | 1 | .005 | 1.707 | 1.177 | 2.477 |
| | | Constant | -1.967 | .077 | 658.526 | 1 | .000 | .140 | | |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Wave, Site_Type, Site_Type * Wave.

Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location, by Age Group

| Variables in the Equation | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------|------|---------|----|------|--------|--------------------|-------|
| D_KnownAge | | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I.for EXP(B) | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| 16-34 | Step 1 ^a | Wave(1) | -.299 | .127 | 5.542 | 1 | .019 | .741 | .578 | .951 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | -.460 | .130 | 12.491 | 1 | .000 | .631 | .489 | .815 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by Wave(1) | .316 | .193 | 2.667 | 1 | .102 | 1.371 | .939 | 2.003 |
| | | Constant | -1.461 | .077 | 362.201 | 1 | .000 | .232 | | |
| 35-59 | Step 1 ^a | Wave(1) | -.270 | .129 | 4.385 | 1 | .036 | .763 | .593 | .983 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | .150 | .104 | 2.094 | 1 | .148 | 1.162 | .948 | 1.423 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by Wave(1) | .440 | .160 | 7.566 | 1 | .006 | 1.553 | 1.135 | 2.125 |
| | | Constant | -1.843 | .076 | 589.169 | 1 | .000 | .158 | | |
| 60+ | Step 1 ^a | Wave(1) | -.158 | .263 | .362 | 1 | .547 | .854 | .510 | 1.429 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | .438 | .191 | 5.270 | 1 | .022 | 1.550 | 1.066 | 2.254 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by Wave(1) | .161 | .324 | .246 | 1 | .620 | 1.174 | .623 | 2.214 |
| | | Constant | -2.368 | .141 | 281.914 | 1 | .000 | .094 | | |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Wave, Site_Type, Site_Type * Wave.

Driver Belt Use by Wave and Location, by Road

| Variables in the Equation | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------|------|---------|----|------|--------|--------------------|-------|
| City_NonCity | | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I.for EXP(B) | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| City | Step 1 ^a | Wave(1) | -.119 | .128 | .867 | 1 | .352 | .887 | .690 | 1.141 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | .008 | .100 | .007 | 1 | .933 | 1.008 | .829 | 1.226 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by Wave(1) | .136 | .164 | .694 | 1 | .405 | 1.146 | .832 | 1.579 |
| | | Constant | -1.821 | .069 | 696.141 | 1 | .000 | .162 | | |
| Non-City | Step 1 ^a | Wave(1) | -.329 | .115 | 8.117 | 1 | .004 | .720 | .574 | .902 |
| | | Site_Type(1) | -.045 | .107 | .173 | 1 | .677 | .956 | .775 | 1.180 |
| | | Site_Type(1) by Wave(1) | .539 | .156 | 11.935 | 1 | .001 | 1.715 | 1.263 | 2.329 |
| | | Constant | -1.733 | .073 | 563.838 | 1 | .000 | .177 | | |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Wave, Site_Type, Site_Type * Wave.

DOT HS 813 442
June 2023



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

