2016 Safety Symposium:
Increasing Seat Belt Use in PA – How and Why?

Francisco Gomez
NHTSA Region 2
The Problem

• In 2015, 35,092 traffic fatalities occurred nationwide

• In Pennsylvania, 1,200 fatalities (2015)
  – 127,127 crashes
  – 3,030 Serious Injuries
  – 784 occupant fatalities
SEAT BELT USE RATE

Nationwide- 88.5% (2015)

U.S. Seat Belt Use: 1983 - 2009

Percent Front Seat Belt Use

Year

83 85 87 89 91 93 95 97 99 01 03 05 07 09
Seat Belt Use Rate

National Seat Belt Use Rate and Daytime Percent of Unrestrained Passenger Vehicle Occupant Fatalities

Source: NOPUS and FARS
“Click it or Ticket”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utt2y-kZjr4
Pennsylvania’s seat belt use rate is below the national average. However, even at 82.7% use, over 2.2 million Pennsylvanians still are not buckling up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NHTSA estimates that if Pennsylvania were to pass a primary seat belt law, usage could rise by about 7 percentage points.
2015 Seat Belt Use Rates
(including territories)
By Law Type and State

Primary  Secondary  No Adult Seat Belt Law

Primary Laws were recently passed in RI (2011); WV (2013); UT (effective 5/12/2016 to 7/01/2018).

State surveys conducted in accordance with Section 402 SAFETEA-LU
51% of Pennsylvania's motor vehicle traffic fatalities are in rural areas. The fatality rate in rural areas is higher than the rate in urban locations.

Source: 2014 FARS Data

In 2014, seat belt use saved an estimated 381 lives in Pennsylvania. An additional 134 lives could have been saved with 100% restraint use.

Source: STSI
In Pennsylvania, a larger percentage of pickup truck fatalities are unrestrained compared to passenger car and SUV fatalities.

Source: 2014 FARS Data

67% of nighttime fatalities are unrestrained in Pennsylvania compared to 47% of daytime fatalities.

Source: 2014 FARS Data
Light Truck and Van Occupant Fatalities
Light Truck and Van Occupant Fatalities
In 2010, crashes cost Pennsylvania

$5.9 billion –

About $461 for each resident

*(The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised))
FAST Act Requirements: Occupant Incentive Grant

All States Must MEET

1. Occupation Protection Plan
2. Participation in Click-it-or Ticket
3. Child Restraint Inspection Stations
4. Child Passenger Safety Technicians
FAST Act Requirements: Occupant Incentive Grant

- Additional Requirements for Low Seat Belt Use Rate State (Must meet at least 3)

1. Primary Seat Belt Enforcement
2. Occupant Protection Statute
3. Seat Belt Enforcement Plan
4. High Risk Population Countermeasure Programs
5. Comprehensive Occupant Protection Program
6. Occupant Protection Program Assessment
Benefits of Being High Seat Belt Use Rate

• Flexing of the funds: 100% can be moved to S.402
  – Ex. Pedestrian Safety, Distracted Driving, Impaired Driving, etc...

• Easier to qualify
  (~$1.7 million each year)
Reasons for Primary Seat Belt Law

• More than 50% of public support primary enforcement in secondary law states!

• 73% of primary belt law states support primary enforcement provisions!

• Money saved in the state ~$168 million

• Most importantly an additional +50 lives saved!
Traffic fatalities up sharply in 2015 to 35,092

White House and DOT issue call to action to data scientists and public health experts as 2,348 more people died in crashes than in 2014

Read More
THANK YOU!
Increasing Seat Belt Use in PA: How and Why?

Tom Glass, PennDOT

- 2007-2011: 510
- 2008-2012: 500
- 2009-2013: 474
- 2010-2014: 459
- 2011-2015: 447
- 2012-2016: 430
- 2013-2017: 413

5-Year Average Fatalities
5-Year Average Target
Linear Trend

- 2007-2011: 1,002
- 2008-2012: 938
- 2009-2013: 901
- 2010-2014: 865
- 2011-2015: 833
- 2012-2016: 792
- 2013-2017: 751

5-Year Average Serious Injuries
5-Year Average Target
Linear Trend

![Bar chart showing the number of unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant crashes from 2007 to 2017. The chart indicates a decrease in crashes over the years.](chart_image)
Unrestrained Crashes as % of Total Crashes by Hour of the Day in 2015
Drivers in Reportable Crashes of Applicable Units by Age Group and Restraint Usage (2011-2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Restrained</th>
<th>Unrestrained</th>
<th>Other/Unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent Unrestrained&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-19</td>
<td>76,444</td>
<td>6,636</td>
<td>8,952</td>
<td>92,032</td>
<td>7.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>114,220</td>
<td>13,553</td>
<td>21,498</td>
<td>149,271</td>
<td>9.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>87,049</td>
<td>9,496</td>
<td>18,948</td>
<td>115,466</td>
<td>8.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>68,927</td>
<td>6,668</td>
<td>14,809</td>
<td>90,404</td>
<td>7.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>58,510</td>
<td>5,054</td>
<td>11,811</td>
<td>75,375</td>
<td>6.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>61,090</td>
<td>4,739</td>
<td>11,237</td>
<td>77,066</td>
<td>6.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>61,716</td>
<td>4,372</td>
<td>10,665</td>
<td>76,763</td>
<td>5.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>60,932</td>
<td>3,970</td>
<td>10,199</td>
<td>75,101</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>53,030</td>
<td>3,156</td>
<td>8,314</td>
<td>64,500</td>
<td>4.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>40,986</td>
<td>2,194</td>
<td>6,237</td>
<td>49,417</td>
<td>4.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>29,178</td>
<td>1,517</td>
<td>4,082</td>
<td>34,777</td>
<td>4.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>20,057</td>
<td>1,044</td>
<td>2,801</td>
<td>23,902</td>
<td>4.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>14,204</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>1,866</td>
<td>16,912</td>
<td>4.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>10,820</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>1,461</td>
<td>12,927</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>6,193</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>7,383</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>1,603</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1,965</td>
<td>5.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;94</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>14,155</td>
<td>15,632</td>
<td>5.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>765,550</td>
<td>65,250</td>
<td>148,083</td>
<td>978,883</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Applicable Units include automobiles, small and large trucks, vans, and SUVs.

<sup>a</sup> Percent Unrestrained is the number of unrestrained drivers where restraint usage is known.
PA Seat Belt Rate History (1985-2016)

- Pennsylvania passed a safety belt law (secondary violation)
- First seat belt survey methodology developed
- Pennsylvania launched "Click It or Ticket" seat belt initiative
- Required redesign of the seat belt survey methodology
Occupant Protection Feedback

• The percentage of people who say they ‘Always wear a seat belt...when driving or riding in a car’ increased by nearly 10% from 77.06% in 2014 to 86.51% in 2015.

• The percentage of people who would ‘Support a law that made it a primary offense for adults in the front seat of a vehicle to not wear a seat belt’ increased by 17% from 2014 to 2015.
2015 Results – Seat Belt Use

How often do you use seat belts when you drive or ride in a car, van, sport utility vehicle, or pickup?

- Always: 86.51%
- Most of the time: 8.26%
- Half of the time: 1.70%
- Rarely: 1.22%
- Never: 2.31%
2015 Results – Seat Belt Use

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

- Yes: 34.99%
- No: 65.01%
2015 Results – Seat Belt Use

What do you think the chances are of getting a ticket if you don’t wear your safety belt?

- Always: 55.65%
- Most of the time: 8.99%
- Half of the time: 11.66%
- Rarely: 20.66%
- Never: 3.04%
2015 Results – Seat Belt Use

Would you support a law that made it a primary offense for adults in the front seat of a vehicle to not wear a seat belt?

- Yes: 68.53%
- No: 31.47%
Current Occupant Protection Countermeasures

- High-Visibility Enforcement
  - Periodic High-Visibility Belt Law Enforcement
    - Thanksgiving and May Click It or Ticket
    - Teen Seat Belt and Child Passenger Safety Week
  - Sustained Belt Law Enforcement
  - Nighttime (10 PM to 5 AM) Focus
    - Often coordinated with DUI operations
  - Approximately 350 local police departments and the PA State Police participate in campaigns.
  - Paid and Earned Media to support efforts
Current Occupant Protection Countermeasures

- Child Occupant Protection Programs
  - PA State Police Child Passenger Fitting Stations
    • 89 patrol stations; ~2,500 seats check/year
  - Traffic Injury Prevention Project (PA AAP)
    • Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training
    • Public Education and Outreach Training
    • Car Seat Loaner Programs
• Organize a statewide OP stakeholders group.
  – Additional focus towards OP during existing regional planning efforts.

• Survey the core demographic of seat belt violators to see what messages and delivery formats work.

• Additional focus towards sustained enforcement to reinforce the message that tickets will be written for seat belt violations.

• Conduct outreach to police departments to change the culture towards writing seat belt citations.
• Program Management
  – Organize a statewide OP stakeholders group.
• Legislation/Regulation & Policy
  – Amend the current seat belt law in Pennsylvania, for all drivers and passengers who are not covered by the child passenger safety law or Graduated Driver Licensing law, to a primary offense which is the standard for all traffic laws.
2015 NHTSA PA Occupant Protection Program Assessment – Takeaways

• Legislation/Regulation & Policy
  – Improve the current seat belt law in Pennsylvania, if primary enforcement is not an option, to at least:
    • Increase the base fine to $75 to match the fine for violating the child passenger safety protection laws;
    • Require all commonwealth and local public agency employees to wear seat belts when on official agency business;
    • Extend the violation to cover back seat occupants;
    • Remove the requirement for the conviction of the primary offense before the seat belt secondary offense can be considered by the court; and
    • Post convictions of the seat belt law to the driver’s file.
Law Enforcement
- Implement a law enforcement stakeholders working group to develop an occupant protection general deterrence model addressing:
  - Law and policy generation
  - Collaborative enforcement
  - Media exposure
  - Adjudication improvement
• Law Enforcement
  – Combine nighttime seat belt enforcement activities with impaired driving campaigns.
  – Promote NHTSA’s Traffic Occupant Protection Strategies (TOPS) training.
• Communication
  – Continue utilizing Click It or Ticket during campaigns and social norming messages at all other times.
  – Encourage partners and stakeholders to take a proactive role in supporting seat belt use (ex. letters to the editor).
2015 NHTSA PA Occupant Protection Program Assessment – Takeaways

- **Occupant Protection for Children**
  - Work with trusted local minority organizations to develop and test infographics and low literacy materials promoting occupant protection for children.
2015 NHTSA PA Occupant Protection Program Assessment - Takeaways

• **Occupant Protection for Children**
  – Use the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s statutory requirement that safety education be included as a part of student education at elementary, middle, and high school levels. (Academic Standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education, 22 Pa. Code, Chapter 4, Appendix D (#006-276) 10.3.3; 10.3.6; 10.3.9; 10.3.12.)
  – Institutionalize the distribution and use of recently evaluated materials so that more children throughout the Commonwealth have an opportunity to learn about safety in and around a vehicle, paying particular attention to children who have moved out of boosters (after age eight) and up to the time that they begin driving.
• Outreach
- Encourage State and local partners and stakeholders (e.g., Department of Health, hospitals and healthcare providers, professional sports teams, trucking companies, insurance companies, and other businesses) to proactively support occupant protection and child passenger safety by:
  • writing letters to local papers supporting Click It or Ticket mobilizations, affirming the benefits of increased enforcement of the seat belt laws, and encourage readers to always buckle up or risk a citation;
  • educating their legislators on the benefits of primary seat belt laws and enhanced child passenger safety laws;
  • promoting seat belt and child passenger safety restraint use messaging at sporting venues and events;
  • adopting seat belt use policies for all employees driving for business purposes.
Open Discussion