

OCCUPANT PROTECTION

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

SEAT BELTS

California's 2009 seat belt use rate is 95.3 percent (August 2009), this represents 34.9 million persons wearing seat belts. NHTSA estimates that 1,424 Californian lives were saved at the current seat belt use rate. However, the fact remains that 1,724,900 Californians are not utilizing restraint systems, and are therefore, at higher risk for death or injury, if involved in a collision. In California, the percent of unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities (all seat positions) increased from 36 percent in 2007 to 38 percent in 2008. California is much better than the national average of 55 percent and only Oregon at 35 percent has a better rate than California. NHTSA estimates that about half or 351 of the 702 known unrestrained fatalities would be alive today had they simply buckled up. The 2008 SWITRS data reports 70.8 percent of vehicle occupants killed in automobile collisions were using seat belts. In the last five years (2004 to 2008), the percentage of occupants killed in automobile collisions and using safety belts increased by 17.1 percentage points from 53.7 percent to 70.8 percent.

California conducted its fifth teen statewide seat belt observational survey. The 2008 survey teen seat belt use rate is 89.8 percent, up from 88.9 percent in 2007. While the teen seat belt compliance rate has increased 3.2 percentage points since the first survey in 2004 with a rate of 86.6, more efforts need to be focused on that population. In 2008, the percent of unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant "teenaged" fatalities was 37 percent - of the five largest states in terms of total traffic fatalities, (CA, FL, TX, GA, & NC), California has the best rate. Since restraints are about 50 percent effective in preventing a fatality, NHTSA estimates that 42 dead California teens would be alive today had they simply buckled up.

Persons considered "high-risk," (e.g., teens, non-English speakers, and those in the lower socioeconomic classes) remain involved in a disproportionate number of fatal and injury collisions. The rich diversity that typifies many communities in California contributes to the vitality and strength of the state as a whole. At the same time, it presents a number of challenges for health departments, law enforcement, and community based organizations committed to addressing occupant protection. This high-risk group requires special education and programs targeting cultural and language barriers. In California, we continue to see an increase in ethnic and linguistic groups. According to the new projections by the California's Department of Finance Demographics Unit, the Hispanic populations will constitute the majority of California by 2042. By the middle of the century, the projections indicate that Hispanics will represent 52 percent of the state's population, with Caucasians comprising 26 percent, the Asian population at 13 percent; the African American population at five percent, and Multiracial persons two percent. Both American Indian and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander groups will each make up less than one percent of the state by 2050. Media campaigns will target teens, Spanish, and non-English speaking populations. In addition, health departments will utilize networks and relationships with ethnic communities to address traffic safety issues for the populations they represent.

Through a partnership with the Traffic Safety Center at the University of California Berkeley, OTS will fund the "Next Generation -- Click It or Ticket" campaign by conducting two well-publicized seat belt enforcement mobilizations in November 16 – 29, 2009 and May 24 – June 6, 2010. To promote sustained enforcement, law enforcement agencies

(CHP and local law enforcement) serving at least 50 percent of California's population or serving geographic subdivisions that account for at least 50 percent of California's unbelted fatal vehicle occupants will carry out one to four days and/or nights of intensified seat belt enforcement each month. The goal of the "Next Generation -- Click It or Ticket" campaign is to increase seat belt use statewide to 96 percent by December 31, 2010. OTS will fund 3 million dollars to law enforcement agencies to offset overtime and reporting costs for the campaigns.

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY (CPS)

California's child safety seat use rate is 90.9 percent (August 2009). Child passenger safety remains a difficult topic to master because of the constant technical changes in laws and regulations, and development of new products. California's focus is to increase the child passenger safety compliance rate. Programs will train NHTSA Child Passenger Safety technicians and instructors, but most of all, conduct child passenger safety restraint checkups, create fitting stations and conduct educational presentations.

National research on the effectiveness of child safety seats has found them to reduce fatal injury by 71 percent for infants (less than one year old) and by 54 percent for toddlers (1-4 years old) in passenger cars. For infants and toddlers in light trucks, the corresponding reductions are 58 percent and 59 percent, respectively (National Center For Statistics and Analysis – Lives Saved Calculations for Infants and Toddlers, March 2005).

Passenger vehicle occupant fatalities age 0-8 decreased 50 percent from 84 in 2007 to 42 in 2008 and age 4 and under dropped 42 percent from 49 in 2007 to 25 in 2008.

II. ACTION PLANS

California's population continues to increase, with a growth of 1.1 percent, representing over 409,000 new residents in California (California Department of Finances 2008 Demographic Report.) The Office of Traffic Safety continues much needed funding to keep up with the new population totals, provide an ongoing effective occupant protection program that assures the public is educated and motivated to use seat belts and child safety seats on every ride. A combination of legislative mandates, enforcement, public information campaigns, education, and incentives are necessary to achieve significant, lasting increases in occupant restraint usage.

The purpose of the 405 incentive grant program is to reinforce key elements of a strategy to encourage states to enact and strengthen occupant protection laws and provide for the enforcement efforts related to the laws. The program will provide for NHTSA's Standardized Child Passenger Safety Training, the certification and re-certification program for the technician and instructor level candidates, and provide for child passenger safety seat check ups and fitting stations. The California Department of Public Health (DPH) provides assistance to the California Office of Traffic Safety with the statewide coordination of child passenger safety efforts in California. Through the Vehicle Occupant Safety Program, DPH staff assists local agencies by providing technician training and resources to counties and regions in need.

Through a partnership with the California Department of Transportation, OTS funded more than 600 "Click it or Ticket" road signs that are displayed every 50 miles throughout the state highway system. In 2010, there will be approximately 200 signs available to grantees for installation within their jurisdictions. In addition, approximately 325 fixed freeway

changeable message signs illuminate the “Click it or Ticket” message during the NHTSA mobilization.

The fine for not wearing a seat belt or a driver allowing an unrestrained passenger is approximately \$132 a first offense and \$245 for a second offense. Child passenger restraint violations are \$435 for a first offense and \$970 for a second offense.

III. TASKS

TASK 1 - PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION

This task provides for the necessary staff time and expenses incurred by OTS that are directly related to the planning, development, coordination, monitoring, auditing, and evaluation of grants within this program area, and the preparation of the 2010 Highway Safety Plan. Funding is also provided in this task for the printing of brochures and pamphlets, distributing literature and media materials developed through successful grants, or obtained from other sources. Assistance is also provided under this task to individuals to attend and participate in technology transfer workshops, training sessions, or educational meetings or conferences.

TASK 2 - COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY OCCUPANT PROTECTION GRANTS

These grants conducted by county health departments include activities with schools, churches, medical facilities, law enforcement, courts, media, civic groups, large and small businesses, governmental agencies, etc. These grants develop child safety seat programs that educate and train on the correct use of safety belts and child safety seats. Activities include: conducting media events, public information campaigns, child safety seat check ups, child safety seat and seat belt surveys, educational presentations, providing NHTSA Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician training; court diversion classes; disseminating educational literature; distributing low cost or no cost child safety seats to low income families; and serving as fitting stations.

Grant #	Fund	Agency	FFY 2010 Funds
OP0901	402	Butte County	\$99,358
OP0906	402	Santa Clara County	\$160,346
OP1001	402	San Diego County HHS	\$207,000
OP1002	402	Los Angeles	\$750,000
OP1004	402	Glendora	\$120,283
OP1007	402	Siskiyou County	\$68,939
OP1009	402	University of California, San Diego	\$193,094
OP1010	402	University of California, Davis	\$117,385

TASK 3 - ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION OCCUPANT PROTECTION GRANTS

These grants conducted by law enforcement and fire personnel include enforcement and education to increase the use of safety belts and child safety seats. Activities include: conducting media events, public information campaigns, child safety seat checkups, child safety seat and seat belt surveys, educational presentations; disseminating educational literature; providing NHTSA Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician training; distributing low cost or no cost child safety seats to low income families.

Grant #	Fund	Agency	FFY 2010 Funds
OP1005	402	Yuba City	\$127,809

TASK 4 - STATEWIDE USAGE SURVEYS

402

OP0801 - CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

STATEWIDE SEAT BELT, CHILD SAFETY SEAT, AND TEEN SEAT BELT USE SURVEYS

Estimates of seat belt usage rates of vehicle occupants on state and local roads and facilities are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of NHTSA funded occupant safety programs. Six surveys are planned. Four summer and spring surveys will estimate seat restraint usage rates of front seat occupants (and infant/toddlers in any vehicle position) on non-highway and highway roads. Pre- and post-test will be run on subsets of survey data collected in the spring and summer. Two fall surveys of 100 high school sites will be collected to estimate seat belt usage rates for high school drivers and passengers at high school campus parking lots. (\$211,112)

TASK 5 - STATEWIDE CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY TRAINING

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OP1006 – DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

VEHICLE OCCUPANT SAFETY PROGRAM (VOSP)

The Vehicle Occupant Safety Program will provide statewide coordination, working with its many State and local partners, to promote best practices in child passenger safety (CPS) to reduce crash-related injuries for all children between birth and age eight. Objectives are twofold: 1) to improve the Technician Training System by increasing opportunities to reach out to Instructors and over 2,000 technicians with technical information and resources; and 2) to strengthen local CPS capacity (specifically but not limited to local public health departments) by providing educational resources for CPS Week, sharing of information through Network teleconferences and at the Childhood Injury Prevention Conference, collecting and sharing CPS related vehicle code data to ensure local funding streams, conducting a statewide CPS needs assessment to evaluate program competency and collaborating with the State Department of Social Services to provide capacity an appropriate procedures for child transporters. (\$357,536)

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OP1008 – CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

CALIFORNIA OCCUPANT RESTRAINT CAMPAIGN (CORC)

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) will conduct a 12-month traffic safety grant to conduct community outreach and enforcement measures to increase seat belt and child restraint usage. The grant goals are to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries in collisions in which victims did not use, or improperly used, their vehicle occupant restraint system. Objectives are to provide comprehensive traffic safety educational seminars, child safety seat check-up inspections, distribute child safety seats, and conduct statewide awareness and enforcement days. The grant will provide child passenger safety certification training to CHP as well as allied police, fire and health professionals. (\$1,058,065)

TASK 6 – INNOVATIVE GRANTS TO INCREASE SEAT BELT USE

This task includes a public information and education campaign, enforcement activities, mini grants for agencies, and personnel to coordinate those efforts. There are currently no planned or continuing grants in this task.

TASK 7 - MINI-GRANTS TO INCREASE SEAT BELT USE

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OP1003 - UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

"NEXT GENERATION - CLICK IT OR TICKET" MINI-GRANT PROGRAM 2009-10

In FFY 2010, California will launch the "Next Generation -Click It or Ticket" program with a highly publicized seat belt enforcement mobilization on November 17-30, 2009, and a second mobilization will occur on May 24 - June 6, 2010. In addition, the Click It or Ticket campaign will promote sustained seat belt enforcement, a program in which state and local law enforcement agencies representing at least 50 percent of California's population or serving geographic subdivisions that account for at least 50 percent of California's unbelted fatal vehicle occupants will conduct intensified monthly enforcement efforts during daytime or nighttime hours. The goal is to increase seat belt use in California to 96 percent.

California's 2010 Annual Performance Report will report the degree to which the sustained enforcement strategy was carried out, results of the enforcement, and the overtime hours dedicated to the enforcement operations. (\$3,288,042)