

OCCUPANT PROTECTION

Current research, best practice counter-measures and social media campaigns to assist in interventions with 15-24 year-olds.

BEST PRACTICES

Tragically, seat belt use is lowest among teen drivers. In fact, the majority of teenagers involved in fatal crashes are unbuckled. In 2016, a total of 818 teen (15- to 18-year-old) drivers and 569 passengers died in passenger vehicles driven by teen drivers, and 58 percent of those passengers were NOT wearing their seat belts at the time of the fatal crash. As teens start driving and gradually gain independence, they don't always make the smartest decisions regarding their safety. They may think they are invincible, that they don't need seat belts. They may have a false notion that they have the right to choose whether or not to buckle up.

- From the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website

COUNTERMEASURES THAT WORK

A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices Ninth Edition, 2017

The guide is a basic reference to assist State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs) in selecting effective, evidence-based countermeasures for traffic safety problem areas, seatbelts included.

The guide:

- describes major strategies and countermeasures that are relevant to SHSOs;
- summarizes strategy/countermeasure use, effectiveness, costs, and implementation time; and
- provides references to the most important research summaries and individual studies.

GUIDE: https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/812478_countermeasures-that-work-a-highway-safety-countermeasures-guide-.pdf

FOR PARENTS

What Can You Do?

- **Let them know:** Not only is buckling up the law, it's also one of the easiest and most effective actions in reducing the chances of death and injury in a crash. Help your teen understand why seat belts are so important (most importantly, because seat belts prevent ejection from a vehicle), and that they must be worn in the front seat and the back seat, every trip, every time. Talk to your teen about the seat belt laws in your State. Tell your teen that it's dangerous and reckless to ride in a car unbuckled. Make them aware of the consequences of not buckling up: tickets, loss of driving privileges, injury, or even death in the event of a crash.
- **Set the example:** One of the best things you can do as a parent and role model is to always wear your seat belt in the car. Children who grow up watching their parents buckle up are more likely to buckle up when they become drivers. And, before you ever pull out of the driveway, ensure all passengers are buckled to further impress upon your teen the importance of buckling up.
- **Remind Them:** This isn't a one-time conversation, it's an ongoing effort. Ask your teen often about wearing a seat belt, and give simple reminders from time to time. Something as simple as a sticky note in the car can be a helpful visual reminder to your teen driver. Your teen should buckle up every trip, as the driver, as a passenger, in the front seat, and in the back.

LEGISLATION & ENFORCEMENT

Strategies to Increase Seat Belt Use

- Increased penalties for violating seat belt laws may include higher fines or points on a driver's license.

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- Short-term, 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 mixes 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.

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