

Emphasis Area: Unrestrained Vehicle Occupants						
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction of Unrestrained Vehicle Occupant Fatalities - Reduction of Unrestrained Vehicle Occupant Suspected Serious Injuries 					
Strategy 1 - Laws & Enforcement	Purpose: Policies and laws focus on vehicle occupants using safety restraints and enhancing safe driving behaviors; and enforcement can help to change behavior. Adoption of a primary safety belt law that allows officers to stop drivers for that offense alone would make a significant difference in saving lives. Increasing the penalty for a citation would reinforce that Montana takes the nonuse of safety restraint seriously and that no life is expendable.					
Opportunities	Timeline	Status	Lead(s)	Reference	Resources	Measurement of Success
S1.1 Support enhancement and implementation of mandatory minor (under 17 years of age) occupant protection laws per best practices and GDL requirements which includes other risky driving behaviors.	On-going. Annual.	Per the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 10.13.307, an approved traffic education program for young novice drivers must include a parent meeting at the beginning of the driver education class that includes course schedule, requirements, and expectations of the teen student and the parents/guardians; information on Montana's graduated driver licensing (GDL) law; best practices in GDL; and parental involvement.	Office of Public Instruction (OPI)	OPI Traffic Education Program	NHTSAs Countermeasures That Work (CMW)	Number of DE students completed course:
S1.2 Continue to support Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) & SETT efforts at the state and local level focusing on unrestrained vehicle occupants among other risky driving behaviors. (HSP, Strategy 5, Law Enforcement, p.60)	Annual. On-going	MDT partnered with law enforcement agencies participants and provided significant manpower for both programs. State Highway Traffic Safety Section(SHTSS) provides funding for HVE efforts implemented by law enforcement (LE). Participating agencies provide national mobilization & HVE at local at-risk events. Funding is a competitive grant process requiring a work plan and regular reporting.	Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) & Local LE- Department of Justice (DOJ), SHTSS-MDT	HSP 2024-2026, HSP FFY 2023, HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021	CMW	Seat Belt & Child Restraint Citations:

<p>S1.3 Continue to support Tribal law enforcement Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) efforts focusing on unrestrained vehicle occupants among other risky driving behaviors. (HSP, Strategy 5, Law Enforcement, p.60)</p>	<p>Annual. On-going</p>	<p>Funded by NHTSA 405 program & managed by SHTSS-MDT, Tribal STEP grants assist tribal law enforcement in conducting HVE at local at-risk events & to establish checkpoints with the purpose of checking for seat belt and child safety seat use and impaired drivers. Funding is a competitive grant process requiring a work plan and regular reporting.</p>	<p>Tribal LE agencies, SHTSS-MDT</p>	<p>HSP 2024-2026, HSP FFY 2023, HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021</p>	<p>CMW</p>	<p>Seat Belt & Child Restraint Citations:</p>
<p>NEED TO DISCUSS PRIORITIZATION FOR COMING YEAR IN ADVANCE OF 2025 S1.4 Support efforts from safety partners and stakeholders to implement a primary seatbelt law.</p>	<p>Legislative Session 2025 Legislative Session 2023 Legislative Session 2021</p>	<p>Review & update related safety educational outreach materials with confirmed consistent messaging (such as fact sheets, speaking points and other educational materials). Occupant Protection Program Assessment that was conducted May 10 – May 14, 2021. 2021 Legislative Session was unsuccessful in promoting safety of vehicle occupants as the secondary law was not strengthened and a primary seatbelt law was not passed. 2023 Legislative Session was unsuccessful in promoting safety of vehicle occupants as the secondary law was not strengthened and a primary seatbelt law was not passed.</p>	<p>Collaboration of traffic safety partners not limited to DPHHS, DOJ, Department of Revenue (DOR), OPI, DLI, Department of Administration (DOA), MDT; AARP; AAA; Montana Association of Counties (MACo), Montana Sheriffs & Peace Officers (MSPOA) and Montana Municipal Interlocal Association (MMIA)</p>	<p>2021 Occupant Protect Program Assessment, 2017 Occupant Protect Program Assessment</p>	<p>Resource needed: Legislator or other identified traffic safety coalition lead</p>	<p>Passage of Primary Law.</p>

<p>Be aware of possible impacts due to efforts on primary seat belt . Support increasing the current seat belt penalty of \$25 to be consistent with the \$100 penalty for the child passenger safety restraint law.</p>	<p>Legislative Session 2025 Legislative Session 2023 Legislative Session 2021</p>	<p>Review & update of related safety materials (fact sheets & educational materials). 2021 Legislative Session did not see a bill to increase seat belt fines. 2021 Legislative Session was unsuccessful in promoting safety of vehicle occupants as the secondary law was not strengthened/ increased fines and a primary seatbelt law was not passed. 2023 Legislative Session was unsuccessful in promoting safety of vehicle occupants of vehicle occupants as the secondary law was not strengthened/ increased fines and a primary seatbelt law was not passed.</p>	<p>Collaboration of traffic safety partners</p>	<p>2017 Occupant Protect Program Assessment</p>	<p>CMW; Resource needed: Legislator or identified traffic safety coalition lead</p>	
<p>To Watch: Promote local jurisdictional adoption of seat belt ordinance if appropriate.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Local ordinances can be enacted which do not exceed state statute.</p>	<p>Local government agencies</p>		<p>CMW</p>	<p>Implementation of Ordinances. MDT has no knowledge of local seat belt ordinances that have been adopted.</p>
<p>Strategy 2: Communication, Education & Injury Prevention</p>	<p>Purpose: Use of a vehicle safety restraint can reduce fatalities and suspected serious injuries and improve crash outcomes. The key to improved crash outcomes is correct use of seat belts and child passenger safety seats every trip, every time. Education, training, and public outreach are effective tools to support and promote workplace policies and laws, enforcement activities, safety programs and messaging materials. Developing and strengthening partnerships with private employers, community-based organizations, and public agencies to encourage and promote the use of safety belts and child passenger safety seats.</p>					

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<p>2.1 Sustain and grow the community-based Buckle Up Montana program. (HSP, Strategy 1 Occupant Protection, p. 41)</p>	<p>Annual. Ongoing.</p>	<p>Grass roots community coalitions funded by NHTSA grants through SHTSS-MDT to implement local public information and educational (PI&E) programs to promote seat belt and child passenger seat use. These coalitions also conduct CPS training and car seat fittings and work with law enforcement partners to conduct Alive at 25 courses within their local communities. Four Buckle Up Montana Coalitions cover Cascade, Flathead, Lewis & Clark, Jefferson, Broadwater, and Missoula counties implement public information & education program encouraging seat belt use & child passenger safety.</p>	<p>BUMT Coordinators, Yellowstone Co SK, and other local agencies, & MDT-SHTSS</p>	<p>HSP FFY 2023, HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021</p>		<p>Program implementation of educating communities on seat belt and proper car seat use. Reduce unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities in all seated positions</p>
<p>2.2 Sustain and grow the Safe On All Roads - SOAR - Tribal community program focusing on seat belt and child passenger seat use. (HSP, Strategy 6, Native American Traffic Safety, p. 66.)</p>	<p>Annual. Ongoing.</p>	<p>The SOAR program focuses on promoting safe driving practices including seat belt & child passenger seat use within tribal communities. SHTSS-MDT manages the NHTSA funding and partners with tribal agencies SOAR coordinators to provide tribal specific and relevant safety messaging .</p>	<p>SOAR Coordinators, tribal agencies, Sheila Cozzie, SHTSS-MDT</p>	<p>HSP FFY 2023, HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021</p>		<p>Provide culturally relevant education for tribal communities on the dangers of risky driving & vehicle occupant behaviors.</p>

<p>2.3 Sustain and grow the Teen Traffic Safety Program (HSP, Strategy 7, Teen Traffic Safety, p. 72)</p>	<p>Annual. Ongoing.</p>	<p>Continue to partner with Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) on teen peer-to-peer traffic safety program and other teen traffic safety opportunities to develop campaigns and conduct educational outreach for teens and young adults to include a variety of outreach and media outlets. Chapters sponsored school-wide events to educate on a variety of risky driving behaviors. Encourage campaign use during Teen Driver Safety Week in October. Past funding has included: Ford Driving Skills for Life, Highway Safety Institute, GHSA, and other traffic safety partners</p>	<p>Sheila Cozzie, FCCLA, SHTSS-MDT,</p>	<p>HSP FFY 2023, HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021</p>	<p>CMW</p>	<p>Program implementation/ FCCLA chapters promoting traffic safety initiatives.</p>
<p>2.4 Sustain and grow the Child Passenger Safety Certification Training Program and inspection stations in Montana with increased focus on high-risk populations. (HSP, Strategy 1, Occupant Protection, p.46)</p>	<p>Annual. Ongoing.</p>	<p>Continue to support and promote the National Child Passenger Safety certification and recertification training to maintain and increase CPS technicians; and maintain and increase instructors in Montana. Maintaining inspection stations correlates with maintaining certified instructors.</p>	<p>Tracie Kiesel, CPS Instructor Team, MDT-HSP</p>	<p>HSP FFY 2023, HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021</p>		<p>Nat'l Child Passenger Safety Trainings Scheduled: Technicians & Instructors trained: Technicians & Instructors recertified:</p>
<p>2.5 Continue to support and sustain purchase and distribution of child passenger safety seats. (HSP, Strategy 1, Occupant Protection, p.46.)</p>	<p>Annual. Ongoing.</p>	<p>Purchase and distribution of child safety seats for child restraint inspection stations and CPS technicians statewide with priority given to at risk areas.</p>	<p>Jennifer Wilson, SHTSS-MDT; BUMT Coordinators; CPS Technicians; other traffic safety partners,</p>	<p>HSP FFY 2023, HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021</p>		<p>Number of child passenger seats purchased.</p>

<p>2.6 Development and distribution of public information and educational materials on current research on safety messaging to effect behavioral change on the importance of seat belt use and child safety seats, as noted in S2.1- S2.5. (HSP, Strategy 10, Media, p.86)</p>	<p>As needed.</p>	<p>This opportunity involves the update and distribution of relevant materials that may be outdated and warrant an update due to statute change, industry upgrades, etc. Distribution should consider various media formats & distribution outlets to inform the public stakeholders.</p>	<p>Traffic safety partners not limited to CPS Instructor Team, DPHHS, Department of Labor & Industry (DLI), and SHTSS-MDT</p>	<p>HSP FFY 2023, HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021</p>	<p>NHTSA, National Safety Council (NSC)</p>	<p>Implementation includes development of media plan & distribution plan.</p>
<p>2.7 Continue to support occupant protection (OP) mini grant funding for community education and outreach</p>	<p>Annual. Ongoing.</p>	<p>OP mini grants provide for community outreach and education on the importance of seat belt use and child passenger safety seats. Funding allows for local safety events, media, brochures, & CPS training and equipment. Projects are funded by NHTSA & managed by SHTSS. Grant applications are open to the public and accepted throughout the year. OP mini grants would be for events, speakers, or mini BUMT activities.</p>	<p>Jennifer Wilson, SHTSS-MDT; Local & tribal injury prevention and health specialist; educators; MHP, local & tribal LE/DOJ, fire & rescue, and other first responders; and other traffic safety partners</p>	<p>HSP FFY 2023, HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021</p>		<p>Number of funded mini grants.</p>

<p>2.8 Continue to encourage state agencies and other safety partners to distribute coordinated and consistent educational safety messaging campaigns to increase seat belt and child passenger safety awareness and use. (HSP, Strategy 2, Traffic Records, p. 48)</p>	<p>Annual. Ongoing.</p>	<p>Opportunity involves coordination, collaboration, and communication with all transportation safety partners to distribute NHTSA FARS and MDT serious injury seat belt and childcare seat messaging to internal staff and external city, county & tribal networks to reach grassroots stakeholders to promote and enhance safety benefits of using vehicle safety restraints. Distribution should consider various media formats & distribution outlets to inform the public stakeholders. Includes continued support of promoting <i>Saved By The Belt</i> award and similar recognitions.</p>	<p>Traffic safety partners/ networks not limited to those listed (DPHHS, DOJ, Department of Revenue (DOR), OPI, DLI, Department of Administration (DOA), MDT; local city, county, tribal government agencies & health departments; AARP; AAA; Montana Association of Counties (MACo), Montana Sheriffs & Peace Officers (MSPOA) and Montana Municipal Interlocal Association (MMIA)</p>	<p>2017 Occupant Protect Program Assessment</p>	<p>National Safety Council (NSC)</p>	<p>Campaign implementation to include development & distribution plan. Saved By the Belt Award:</p>
<p>2.9 Continue to encourage state, county, tribal and city agencies, and private employers to coordinate and implement workplace traffic safety policies to include seat belt use and other traffic safety measures.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Access and update workplace traffic safety tool kit with traffic safety partners and determine best methods for public use. Develop safety messaging campaign to roll out traffic safety resource tool kit to public. Consider various outlets for distribution. Outreach should not be limited to BUMT coordinators</p>	<p>Traffic safety partners including DOA, DLI, DPHHS, MMIA, DOJ, OPI, SHTSS- MDT and other state, county, tribal and city transportation and health and LE agencies</p>		<p>Smith System- Drive Different, National Safety Council (NSC)</p>	<p>Workplace policies & toolkit development and resource distribution:</p>

<p>NEED TO REVISIT. 2.10 Promote and increase education and training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and the judiciary to ensure consistent citing and adjudication of occupant protection offenses and consideration of alternative sentencing (i.e., safety education including Alive at 25). (HSP, Strategy 5, Law Enforcement, p. 60)</p>	<p>Annual. Ongoing.</p>	<p>Training enhances the skills & expertise of LEOs when conducting traffic stops. Training conducted by the Traffic Safety Resource Officer (TSRO). The TSRO serves as a liaison between MHP and local and tribal LE agencies, prosecutors, judges, and the public.</p>	<p>TSRO-MHP-DOJ, SHTSS-MDT</p>	<p>HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021</p>		<p>Expand partnerships.</p>
<p>2.11 Develop and/ or promote child passenger safety educational materials with updated and coordinated messaging and a distribution plan</p>	<p>As needed.</p>	<p>Activity involves updating and distribution of relevant materials that may be outdated and warrant an update due to statute change and industry upgrades or change in safety change methodology to include agreed upon consistent safety messaging developed by safety partner experts. Distribution should consider various media formats to inform public stakeholders.</p>	<p>BUMT Coordinators, Safe Kids Worldwide, CPS Instructor Team, Injury Prevention & Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC)- Department of Health & Human Services (DPHHS), SHTSS-MDT</p>		<p>NHTSA, Safe Kids Worldwide (SKWW), National Safety Council (NSC)</p>	<p>Implementation to include development & distribution of resource materials.</p>
<p>Strategy 3: Improve Unrestrained Vehicle Occupant Data</p>	<p>Purpose: Data is an essential part of identifying driver and occupant behaviors, including safety restraint use, misuse, or nonuse. Observational, pre-, and post- seat belt use surveys and child passenger safety checklists are methods of gathering occupant safety restraint use data. Other data resources include citation, crash, and trauma registry data. Evaluation of the effectiveness of workplace policies, laws, enforcement, safety programs, and public outreach activities helps identify areas that may need enhancement or increased focus</p>					
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Status</p>	<p>Lead(s)</p>	<p>Reference</p>	<p>Resources</p>	<p>Measurement of Success</p>

<p>3.1 Continue to conduct observational seat belt surveys, local and statewide. (HSP, Strategy 1, Occupant Protection, p.46)</p>	<p>Periodic Surveys. Annual.</p>	<p>Pre- and post- surveys of seat belt use are a component of traffic safety educational outreach and are a method to determine message effectiveness. Annual seat belt use observations are a NHTSA core measure. <i>New site locations are updated every 5 years.</i> <i>New site submitted for FY 2023.</i></p>	<p>BUMT Coordinators, other traffic safety partners and educators, SHTSS-MDT</p>	<p>HSP FFY 2023, HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021, NHTSA 2017 Occupant Protect Program Assessment</p>		<p>Sustained or Improved seat belt rates.</p>
<p>3.2 Continue to evaluate behavioral surveys on occupant restraint use to include teen and adult behavior, (i.e. Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and MT Needs Assessment)</p>	<p>Bi-annually</p>	<p>The Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) conducted by OPI, is a self-reported safety behavior by MT youth used to identify the leading causes of mortality, morbidity, and social problems among youth. It includes questions on seat belt use, distracted driving, drug use, and impaired driving. The Needs Assessment (DPHHS) student survey focuses on risky behaviors associated with factors resulting in injury and/or impede positive development among our youth. The survey also includes risk and protective factors, which attitudes and opinions research has shown to be highly correlated with these risky behaviors.</p>	<p>OPI & DPHHS</p>	<p>YRBS-OPI, MT Needs Assessment-DPHHS, HSP FFY 2023, HSP FFY 2022, HSP FFY 2021</p>	<p>2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 2021 YRBS, 2019 YRBS & 2022 MT Prevention Needs Assessment 2020 MT Prevention Needs Assessment 2018 MT Prevention Needs Assessment</p>	<p>Increase self-reported safe driving (OP) behaviors. 2024 MT Prevention Needs Assessment</p>

<p>3.3 Child Passenger Car Seat data collection on use and misuse of child safety restraints and distribution of car seats. System allows for monitoring trends and tracking car seat distributions.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>The National Digital Car Seat Check Form (NDCSCF) is a free resource available to all certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians. Available on paper or an electronic platform, this program walks a technician through a structured car seat check, streamlining data collection so that important information is captured along the way. CPSTs and program managers can easily download their seat check data in a format that reduces reporting burdens. The CPS instructor team is engaging in discussions on data collecting efforts in the field and setting goals in relation to baseline and misuse rates. This is ongoing and updates will be provided as available.</p>	<p>Tracie Kiesel, MT CPS Tech Network</p>	<p>CHSP 2020</p>		<p>Number of Child Passenger Safety Technicians using National Digital Car Seat Check Form.</p>
<p>3.4 Research underlying beliefs and behaviors of high-risk groups to better understand their traffic safety behaviors. (Traffic Safety Culture Pooled Fund Studies (TSCPFS) program)</p>	<p>Ongoing. As complete projects become available.</p>	<p>The task of improving the culture of safety begins with understanding the behaviors and beliefs of specific high-risk groups. Developing relevant, impactful safety messaging is the first step in changing the behavior and beliefs of the specific high-risk groups. Implement research findings and best practices as appropriate to include a measure to evaluate success.</p>	<p>DPHHS, OPI, AARP, SHTSS- MDT and other traffic safety partners</p>	<p>CHSP 2020</p>	<p>Research-MDT, NHTSA, GHSA, Insurance Institute of Highway Safety (IIHS), National Safety Council (NSC)</p>	<p>Implement research findings, best practices, and evaluation that align with the CHSP, including Countermeasures That Work, Safe System Approach, and Proven Safety Countermeasures, as appropriate and with consideration of State Statute</p>