

**Unrestrained Vehicle Occupant
CHSP Emphasis Area
Virtual Meeting Agenda**

Tuesday, June 3, 2025, 9-11 a.m.



Alison Malensek, State Highway Traffic Safety Section (SHTSS), Montana Department of Transportation(MDT)
Alyssa Johnson, Trauma Systems Supervisor, EMS & TS, Department of Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS)
John Westerhold, Deputy Director, NHTSA Region 10
Koren Bloom, EMS Coordinator, AMR- Billings, Safe Kids Yellowstone County
Mike Houghton, Driver's Education Director, Office of Public Instruction (OPI)
Pam Langve-Davis, Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan CHSP Manager, MDT
Sheila Cozzie, Cultural Liaison/SOAR Program/Teen Program, SHTSS, MDT
Steve Schmidt, Drive Safe Missoula/ Missoula Buckle Up MT Coordinator, Ci-Co Health Department
Terry Mullins, EMS & Trauma Systems Section Supervisor, DPHHS
Tracie Kiesel, Tri-County (L&C, Broadwater & Jefferson) Buckle Up MT Coordinator, MT CPS Training Coordinator
Wendy Olson Hansen, Flathead County Buckle Up MT Coordinator

Meeting purpose: provide updates from Legislative session, training, and safety initiatives. Discuss opportunities to work together and leverage programs and agencies to develop and communicate upcoming events.

Following introductions, John Westerhold, NHTSA Deputy Director- Region 10 provided staff updates and shared that Lynn Zanto will be the NHTSA Region 10 Program Manager contact. John will continue to attend meetings when available.

HB586-Generally Revise Child Restraint Laws has been signed by the Governor and goes into effect October 1, 2025. Tracie Kiesel, Montana's Child Passenger Seating Coordinator and Trainer provided a resource that has been developed to begin informing CPS technicians across the state, parents, caregivers, and community partners. This resource will be invaluable for Buckle Up Montana and tech teams that will be conducting summer safety events, fairs, and public car seat clinics. A CPS working group has been formed to develop resources for families and outreach for community safety partners, to include law enforcement and health departments. Twenty-five other states have similar laws and will help inform the development of resources. Tracie will be contacting Target and Wal-Mart to inform them of revised laws and need for more booster and convertible car seats. Koren Bloom noted that the rear facing requirements is the minimum and that people should be encouraged to keep children in rear facing for as long as possible. MDT is updating the CPS pamphlet, coloring book, and media. Koren has Safe Kids World Wide resources that she will send to Tracie.

- Alyssa Johnson requested the resource handout to share with trauma and hospital networks.
- Once received, Pam Langve-Davis will share with the emphasis area team and the CHSP Advisory Committee.

Teen Driving Workshop and MT D.R.I.V.E. - Mike Houghton, Director, Traffic Education, OPI

The Traffic Education Office provides information, resources, and support to schools, teachers, parents, and teens involved in state-approved driver education programs in Montana.

OPI continues to partner with local, state and national organizations to produce curriculum and stay abreast of best practices; and collaborates with MDT, DOJ and MVD to promote safety and well-trained drivers on roadways. In doing so OPI evaluates traffic ed programs and approves teacher preparation and school programs based on MCA and ARM.

Traffic Education Office manages the Montana DRIVE Program located in Lewistown. On track since 1979, advanced driving workshops are offered every summer for adults and teen drivers. The Office developed curriculum training modules and an Adaptive Illustrated Montana Driver Manual that provides a training and education options to drivers ed. The manual is on the OPI website and features illustrative photos, quizzes, and direct links for individual chapters. Both curriculum modules and the adaptive manual include seat belts, impaired driving, cell phone and texting- distracted driving.

- OPI is looking for assistance to update and print an Adaptive Illustrated Montana Driver Manual

Montan D.R.I.V.E. is in Lewistown and since 1979, more than 17,000 drivers have participated in a workshop which includes. Controlled breaking, evasive steering, off-road recovery, cornering, et skid control, skid monster. Teen Montana Drive week registration is already full. Last year Teen Montana Drive worked with Sheila Cozzie and added tribal teen drivers. Sheila was instrumental in recruiting five tribal teachers last year and four for this year to help develop driver instruction programs within tribal communities.

CDL Bus Driver Training

This program rolled out in 2023 and follows federal and state rules and regulations and includes training modules as study guides. Participants need to be CPR/First Aid certified, pre-inspection for DMV test is required, and drive trip can be done on site for school bus endorsement. The average number of participants in the first two years was 15. In 2025 there have been five (5) as of May.

- Exploring options for additional training.

Tribal CPS Tech Training - Sheila Cozzie with the State Highway Traffic Section, MDT reported that the SOAR coordinators with Fort Belknap and Blackfeet coordinated two individual cps training courses and car seat check events. Avis Spencer with Fort Belknap Indian Community coordinated the cps training resulting in 14 CPS techs and a car seat event which was held in Havre. Eileen Henderson with the Blackfeet Nation coordinated a cps event resulting in 12 techs and a car set fitting event. Eileen was able to get other resource funding, and 50 car seats were provided to tribal members. Out of State trainers were brought in to teach both courses.

FCCLA Teen Traffic Safety- Sheila Cozzie reported that projects run October through March. For the past nine years, Montana's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) has partnered with MDT to promote teen traffic safety. FCCLA is a student organization program with 65 chapters across Montana. During 2024-25 school year, MDT awarded approximately \$20,518 to eleven FCCLA chapters across the state to create their own local teen traffic safety campaigns. These campaigns ranged from school assemblies on traffic safety issues, to billboard development, community signage improvements, newspaper and radio ads and YouTube videos. As in past year, prizes were given to the top three projects and were awarded as follows:

- 1st Place - \$2,000 grant – Power FCCLA
- 2nd Place - \$1,500 grant – Moore FCCLA
- 3rd Place (tie) - \$500 grant – Fergus County FCCLA
- 3rd Place (tie) - \$500 grant – Jefferson County FCCLA

More information on campaign material created can be found at

[Peer-to-Peer Traffic Safety Campaign Program | Montana Department of Transportation \(MDT\)](#)



Teen Driver Safety Week Activities planned for October

Steve Schmidt with Drive Safe Missoula /Buckle Up MT Coordinator stated that he is working on Missoula's "Be the Change" event with the three Missoula High Schools, like what Koren Bloom has done previously in Billings. This one-day event will feature *Impact Teen Driving* and includes students coordinating and conducting two community events.

- Steve will provide an overview presentation at the November 18th emphasis area meeting.

Wendy Olson Hansen, Flathead County Buckle Up MT Coordinated shared she has been focused on the updates on child passenger safety laws and will be shifting gears to coordinate October event. Wendy reported that a mock crash and ghost out where coordinated and planned by the Big Fork High School student council in May. This event focused on safe driving behaviors and seatbelt use. Throughout the day, students were selected every 15 minutes to represent the 15 fatalities that occur every 15 minutes across the US. Safety partners that were involved included Alert helicopter, Big Fork Fire Dept., Schwarzenberger Wrecking, Flathead Co Health Dept., Flathead Sheriff's Office and Big Fork School District # 38



Upcoming Events / Announcements

Senior All Night Party Tracie reported the event is scheduled for Saturday, June 7th, and will feature the Lewis & Clark County DUI Task Force Escape Room and aligns with improving traffic safety behavior of teen drivers.

Montana's 18th Annual CPS Tech Update -Tracie reported the event was held on May 8th with 7 MT Instructors and 31 MT Technicians. The current number of MT CPS Instructors is 16 and the MT CPS Technicians is 309. The annual training included the 2025 Montana CPS awards:

- Technician (s) of the Year: Megan Spry & Thomas Beers
- Fitting Stattin of the Year: Bozeman Fire Department
- Diamond Award recipient(s): Koren Bloom & Wendy Olson
- Instructor of the Year: Amber Roper

Safe Travel for All Children – Special Needs Transportation (FFY25)

April 8-9, 2025: Missoula-organized by Wendy Hansen with 8 Technicians attending. The instructor: Anthony McGovern-Indiana University School of Medicine-Pediatrics

June 25, 2025: Billings-Combined Hybrid and In-Person – Koren is organizing and hosting event. The online (hybrid) portion of the Course must be completed prior to June 24. The in-person to practice using and installing the Special Needs Seats is June 25. The instructor: Anthony McGovern-Indiana University School of Medicine-Pediatrics

2025 Annual Transportation Safety Meeting - August 13 & 14 at Carroll College in Helena. Focus on determining emphasis areas, strategies and implementation plans .

CPS week is in September and time to promote it is now. Checkup events are scheduled for Billings, Helena, Kalispell, Butte, Great Falls, and Missoula.

- **Car Seat Survey** - Alison has sent a survey looking for timely responses.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Tracie, seconded by Mike.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:23 a.m.