

## Florida Occupant Protection Coalition

# Occupant Protection Program Assessment Key Recommendations

The following are the key recommendations from Florida's Occupant Protection Assessment conducted on March 7 – March 11, 2016.

### PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

1. Establish and convene on a regular basis a statewide occupant protection advisory coalition. The coalition should include agencies and organizations that are representative of Florida's demographic composition and critical to the implementation of occupant protection initiatives.

*Establish teen/graduated driver licensing and child passenger safety sub-committees. An option to one statewide coalition would be to establish and convene three or four regional committees, whose membership is representative of the local region, and establish the above listed sub-committees in each of the regional coalitions.*

2. Work with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan stakeholders to identify and establish occupant protection as a key behavioral emphasis area. Assist in the creation of an occupant protection team to develop strategies and an action plan to be included in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

### LEGISLATION/REGULATION AND POLICY

3. Enhance Florida's current seat belt law to require every operator and passengers in all seating positions (front and back seat) to be secured by an appropriate restraint device when the vehicle is in motion. Publicly recognize those legislators who consistently and actively support strengthening Florida's key occupant protection laws.
4. Continue efforts to enhance the current booster seat law that protects children to be consistent with the American Academy of Pediatrics booster seat recommendations.
5. Expand the child passenger restraint court offender/violator diversion program to include locations throughout the State to serve a greater percentage of those who, with the court's approval, have elected to participate in the child restraint safety program.
6. Develop consistent and current talking points, fact sheets, and other materials and make them readily available on-line for those who can educate decision makers on the importance of the requirement of child restraint system use by child care centers.

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

7. Set a statewide law enforcement goal of increasing public perception that they will be ticketed for failing to comply with seat belt laws. The proven methodology for law enforcement to achieve this goal is the deployment of short duration, evidence based, high-visibility enforcement, which includes

media campaigns and public outreach, exclusively on the days of week, times, and locations where statistical analysis indicates they will have the greatest impact on public safety.

8. To ensure a coordinated statewide focus on occupant protection enforcement, establish reasonable performance expectations for sub-recipients of Florida Department of Transportation State Safety Office funded occupant protection patrols.

*These expectations are not ticket quotas, but provide a clear understanding with contracted agencies that their overall highway safety mission is to reduce injury and death, resulting from motor vehicle crashes, by conducting vigorous high-visibility enforcement coinciding with public education and media outreach. Their specific mission in occupant protection is to encourage greater compliance with the State's seat belt and child passenger safety laws through a high level of motorist contacts during enforcement initiatives and public education campaigns.*

9. Increase the number of deployments of seat belt "checkpoints".

*Positioning spotters to identify seat belt violations is proven to be the most effective and efficient means of enforcement and results in increased productivity.*

10. Recruit more agencies to participate in the Click it or Ticket Challenge and encourage state, county, and municipal agencies to collaborate in joint traffic operations focusing occupant protection enforcement on targeted jurisdictions as a force multiplier.

*The high-visibility enforcement model is most effective when there is a perception of omni-presence of police resources with a common purpose communicated to the public through supporting media outreach. Individual police agencies cannot sustain intense high-visibility traffic enforcement within their jurisdiction throughout the year; however, a collaboration of forces deploying to multiple jurisdictions on a rotating basis is sustainable. The effect of multi-agency enforcement in a limited area increases public perception long after the initiative ceases.*

## **COMMUNICATION**

11. Consider developing a comprehensive communications plan to include the following:

- a. Outcome goals and objectives of the communications program;
- b. Outcome objectives of the paid and earned media programs;
- c. Details of the primary and secondary target audiences based on State data;
- d. Specific requirements for any new materials that will be developed (e.g., paid media messaging will promote a high-visibility law enforcement message), including methods to test messages to ensure they resonate with the target audience;
- e. Media buy plans based on State data by target audience, region of the State, and media type;
- f. Expectations for bonus spots, collateral media (e.g., banners on web pages);
- g. The identification of needed collateral materials such as State crash, injury and fatality data; seat belt and child restraint use data; frequently asked questions, etc., for earned media opportunities;

- h. Template materials to aid law enforcement agencies, partners and stakeholders in promoting the Click It or Ticket mobilization(s), and non-enforcement messaging for other times of the year;
  - i. A timeline for the development and delivery of all communications, including time for review/revision; and
  - j. An ongoing evaluation plan to ensure that the messaging is effective, as well as to make mid-course corrections when it is found to be lacking.
12. Use enforcement messaging only during Click It or Ticket mobilization(s) to maximize the impact of the increased law enforcement activities.
13. Redesign the Department of Transportation website to make it easier for partners and stakeholders to navigate and locate traffic safety programs and materials. Ensure that all materials are current and consistent.

#### **OCCUPANT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN**

14. Rename, refocus, and rebrand the Occupant Protection Resource Center to better identify its purpose and clientele.

*The focus could remain specifically on child passenger safety, in which case “Child Passenger Safety” should be included in the revised name. There should be a members’ only portal to disseminate materials to Child Passenger Safety Technicians and Instructors as well as a public access for downloadable information.*

15. Decrease the attrition rate of trained technicians and instructors by increasing opportunities for continuing education workshops, networking, and by empowering them to provide education to the public beyond fitting station activities.

*Examples of such opportunities include:*

- a. *An annual Child Passenger Safety Technician Conference;*
- b. *Developing or adopting a series of standardized abbreviated courses for:*
  - i. *Hospitals;*
  - ii. *Law enforcement;*
  - iii. *Emergency medical services;*
  - iv. *Age appropriate kindergarten through high school presentations; and*
  - v. *Supplement the current outreach programs to adult parents, grandparents and caregivers within communities with Technician-led workshops at PTA meetings, Car-Fit events, boys’/girls’ clubs, churches, etc.*

16. Survey Child Passenger Safety Technicians with current and expired certifications to evaluate how the recertification (retention rate) could be increased.

17. Create a method and/or process that will enable easy access to the State’s current, accurate morbidity/mortality data. The information should be available to key groups, but not limited to,

program coordinators, Child Passenger Safety Technicians, school teachers, and the media to promote a more thorough understanding of the scope and depth of the traffic safety initiatives.

## **OUTREACH**

18. Facilitate the creation of easy-to-access, private, social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn) for Community Traffic Safety Team program coordinators and members, Child Passenger Safety Technicians and Instructors, and other defined organizations, so that they are able to easily and quickly communicate and collaborate with each other to share best practices and research, ask questions, and post notices of events.
19. Continue the expansion of the Minority Task Force on Occupant Protection outreach program in areas of the State having sufficiently large minority populations to increase seat belt and child restraint system use.

## **DATA AND EVALUATION**

20. Design and implement a true, random sample, statewide direct observation child passenger seat survey annually to monitor occupant restraint rate data for children ages birth to 18, with the ability to track results among children covered under the primary law, ages birth to 18 and separately, teen drivers.
21. Select or develop and make available statewide a standardized high school direct observational survey instrument and analysis template.

*The standardized instrument would be used prior to and after any high school occupant protection intervention to measure the effects of the intervention. Consider gathering all resulting pre- and post-survey data centrally to produce a database which can be summarized on a larger scale, with the results eventually divided into geographic regions.*

22. Develop and implement an ongoing system of countermeasure assessment.

*If the countermeasure is found to be effective (i.e., to increase seat belt or child restraint use), disseminate the countermeasure more broadly. If the countermeasure is not effective, try something else, and assess again, repeating the cycle across a variety of topic areas, empirically developing an effective occupant protection program over time.*