

Florida Occupant Protection Coalition

Occupant Protection - New Program Ideas*

High School Service Learning Programs

Public health messages about safe driving can effectively reach teens if delivered in high schools. This strategy involves developing and implementing a service-learning program to increase safety belt use among high school students. The program would be an ongoing, sustainable, research-based educational program using a peer-to-peer service-learning methodology to encourage teen safe driving behaviors with a special focus on seat belt use. Curriculum would need to meet the standards developed by the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) for a quality service-learning experience.

Expected Effectiveness

Service-learning is widely used for a variety of educational topics. A number of studies report that students engaged in service-learning show a strengthened sense of social and civic responsibility (e.g., Melchior, 1999; Berkas, 1997; Yates & Youniss, 1996; Eyer et al., 2010). Alienation and associated risk-taking behaviors decrease as students experience a heightened awareness of personal competence and meaningful connection to their peers, teachers, schools, and community (e.g., Stephens, 1995; Yates & Youniss, 1996; Follman, 1998; Furco, 2002; Bradley, Eyer, Goldzweig, Juarez, Schlundt, & Toliver, 2007). Juarez, Schlundt, Goldzweig, and Stinson (2006) outlined a conceptual framework linking service-learning and seat belt safety campaigns, suggesting that a peer-to-peer (service-learning) approach could be an effective alternative to traditional public health education campaigns or stand-alone law enforcement campaigns. NHTSA has been in partnership with NYLC to develop best practices for implementing student-led service-learning to increase seat belt use through an effort called Project Ignition.

Hospital Discharge Programs

Discharge instructions provide critical information for patients to manage their own care. The requirement for hospital systems to change from paper medical records to electronic health records provides an opportunity to tailor discharge instructions and make them an effective source of safety information. This approach pairs information and motivational messages on the use of seat belts with hospital discharge information to take advantage of the ready access to populations at risk and the source credibility of the medical community.

Expected Effectiveness

A review uncovered no studies of the effectiveness of hospital discharge programs focused on adult occupant protection, but it did uncover several studies of hospital-based programs focused on increasing child safety seat usage. One study concluded that providing child passenger safety recommendations on computerized discharge instructions were a convenient method of educating parents/guardians about motor vehicle safety. The data suggested that some parents found it educational and a subgroup changed their behaviors after receiving the education (Zonfrillo, Mello, & Palmisciano, 2011).

Targeted Online Advertising

People who have a high likelihood of not wearing a seat belt can be reached using targeted Internet advertising, retargeting/remarketing, and social media with a relevant, compelling, and repeated message to buckle up. This strategy could potentially be combined with additional strategies, such as other types of media and enhanced law enforcement, to produce a variation of High-Visibility Enforcement. The

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overarching principle involves targeting Internet users based on their online search or browsing behavior, or by using their profile/preferences information on a social media website, to determine if they are a prime candidate for the information. The better the fit between the product or idea and the person, the more likely the viewer will attend to the information in an advertisement and accept the message.

Expected Effectiveness

NHTSA has created online materials, including banner ads, social media assets, and web videos, for use as part of their Click It or Ticket campaigns (NHTSA, 2015), and includes guidance in the National Media Work Plan on where to place buys based upon the target demographic. However, this does not currently include in-depth guidance on targeting or retargeting. Likewise, though some States may use social media and Internet ads in an attempt to reach populations such as teens (Sprattler, 2014), nothing as targeted as this proposed approach has been reported. By adding appropriate targeting, it should be possible to enhance the effectiveness of existing materials and to support the development and deployment of even more tightly targeted Internet-based advertising.

Online Learning/e-Learning

This strategy involves developing online courses to inform and motivate use of seat belts by drivers who, based on prior research, are likely to not wear seat belts and can be encouraged to take the course (e.g., for insurance discount) or are compelled to take it (e.g., as part of a remedial program after receiving a citation).

Expected Effectiveness

Online learning has been shown to improve safety behaviors. Ho and Dzung (2010) evaluated the effectiveness of e-learning for construction safety training. Results showed that e-learning improved learning effectiveness and increased safe behaviors during construction operations. One study conducted in Sweden (Wahlberg, 2013) showed that e-learning increased seat belt use. In the study, an e-learning course for drivers caught not wearing their seat belts was evaluated using an online questionnaire distributed before and three months after the course was delivered. Results indicated that the course produced the desired effect of increasing self-reported seat belt use.

Product/Message Placement

Digital video recorders, on-demand television/movie services, and Internet media streaming services allows users to fast-forward or skip traditional commercials, or commercials are omitted altogether by the content provider if a pay-for-service model is used. This strategy applies product/message placement (embedded marketing) techniques to subtly and naturally insert the positive depiction and description of the use of occupant restraints within the normal flow of a movie, television program, or other medium to increase awareness and alter behaviors without blatantly indicating to the observer/user that the message placement is, in fact, a seat belt related advertisement. Product/message placement for occupant protection can be executed in almost all media including radio, video games, music, video/DVDs, magazines, books, musicals, mobile phone applications, and content on the Internet.

Expected Effectiveness

Cowan, Dubosh, and Hadley (2009) examined seat belt use in movies. Overall, the seat belt use rate was 15.4 percent. No differences in seat belt use rates were noted for high-speed or unsafe vehicle operation. The injury rate for unbelted characters involved in crashes was 10.7 percent. The pattern was different for primetime television with seat belts being worn by 62 percent of individuals in television programs and 86 percent for automobile commercials (McGwinn et al., 2006). It is not clear at this point, however, how much effort has been put forth to increase seat belt use in movies and television through message placement. The low rates of use in the studies above suggest that either little is being done to promote seat belt use on the screen or the industry has not been receptive of efforts to date. In either case, there is room for improvement.

