THE OCCUPANT PROTECTION DIVISION UPDATE

A Quarterly Update on News and Developments in Occupant Protection, Distracted Driving, and Pediatric Vehicular Heatstroke
Brought to you by NHTSA's Occupant Protection Division

July 2022

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the July edition of the *Occupant Protection Division Update*, a quarterly bulletin with news and announcements on occupant protection, distracted driving, and pediatric vehicular heatstroke. This edition contains several announcements and details about new NHTSA resources, activities, research, and publications in these areas.

We hope you find the *Update* helpful and welcome your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

Marietta Bowen

Chief, NHTSA Occupant Protection Division

2021 Early Estimate of Traffic Fatalities

On May 17th, NHTSA released its early estimate of traffic fatalities for 2021. The data shows that an estimated **42,915** people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes last year, a **10.5% increase** from the 38,824 fatalities in 2020. The projection is the highest number of fatalities since 2005 and the largest annual percentage increase in the Fatality Analysis Reporting System's history. Behind each of these numbers is a life tragically lost, and a family left behind.

The full-year estimate of 2021 traffic fatalities also provides a look at state-level estimates during the pandemic. As in 2020, all 10 NHTSA regions are estimated to see increases in fatalities. Forty-four states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are all projected to have had an increase in traffic deaths, as compared to 2020.

Preliminary data reported by the Federal Highway Administration show that vehicle miles traveled in 2021 increased by about 325 billion miles, or about 11.2%, as compared to 2020.

Data estimates show the fatality rate for 2021 was 1.33 fatalities per 100 million VMT, marginally down from 1.34 fatalities in 2020. While the fatality rate continued to rise in the first quarter, it declined in the other three quarters of 2021, compared to 2020.

Additionally, the traffic fatalities in many categories showed relatively large increases in 2021, as compared to 2020.

"With our National Roadway Safety Strategy and the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we are taking critical steps to help reverse this devastating trend and save lives on our roadways."

U.S. Transportation Secretary,

Pete Buttigieg

New Child Safety Seat Side-Impact Final Rule

NHTSA Improves Child Safety Seat Testing Standards with Final Rule on Side Impact Protection

On June 22, NHTSA issued a final rule that updated testing requirements for child safety seats to improve the protection of children during side-impact crashes. The rule is a major advance in protecting children from serious injury in traffic crashes.

> *"Side-impact collisions cause serious injuries and deaths in young children each year. By establishing more comprehensive testing requirements, we are advancing child passenger safety and assuring parents that the safety seat they choose for their child must meet the highest safety standards."*
>
> **NHTSA Administrator,**
>
> **Dr. Steven Cliff**

This final rule amends Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 213, "Child restraint systems," by adding side impact performance requirements for child safety seats. The current standard requires child seats to meet performance criteria in a test simulating a 30-mph frontal impact. The final rule establishes a side impact test that replicates a 30-mph side collision, commonly known as a T-bone crash.

The test relies on a sliding vehicle seat mounted on rails, known as a sled, and a vehicle door mounted on the sled to resemble the vehicle and simulates what happens to a child and child seat in a T-bone crash. Child seats will be evaluated using the newly developed Q3s side impact test dummy representing a 3-year-old child along with the well-established CRABI 12-month-old child test dummy.

Visit the NHTSA website to read the press release or learn more about the rulemaking process.

Pediatric Heatstroke Prevention Campaign Continues

As the hot summer months continue, NHTSA urges parents and caregivers to take special precautions to ensure children aren't left in hot cars. **Tragically, as of July 5th, nine children across the U.S. have died this year due to heatstroke suffered after being left in hot cars.** This is following 23 deaths in 2021.

Most consumers don't realize that:

- A child's body temperature rises three to five times faster than an adult's, and in just **10 minutes a car can heat up by 20 degrees**.
- Rolling down windows does little to keep a vehicle cool, and heatstroke fatalities have occurred **even in vehicles parked in shaded areas**.
- Summertime is the peak season for these tragic incidents, but heatstroke can occur in **outdoor temperatures as low as 57 degrees.**

While it may seem like an impossible mistake to make, no one is immune: parents and caregivers from all walks of life, all genders, income levels, ethnicities, ages and races have lost children to heatstroke.



We each have a role to play to help keep our kids safe. Help us share NHTSA's Lifesaving Tips and Resources with your friends, neighbors, colleagues, networks and constituencies. To access NHTSA's **Heatstroke Prevention Toolkit,** please visit TrafficSafetyMarketing.gov.

Child Passenger Safety Week

Child Passenger Safety Week is September 18-24, 2022

This year, Child Passenger Safety Week will be held from **September 18-24**, culminating in National Seat Check Saturday on September 24.

Car crashes are a **leading cause of death for children**. On average, 3 children were killed and an estimated 380 children were injured every day in traffic crashes in 2020.

NHTSA has developed an array of CPS Week campaign materials for use at the state and local level to raise awareness and ensure children are properly restrained every trip, every time. These materials, including media materials you can personalize for your community, an op-ed, fact sheet, talking points, and education tools are on TrafficSafety-Marketing.gov. We urge state and local public health and traffic safety advocates to use these free safety materials to generate awareness about child passenger safety in your community throughout the year.

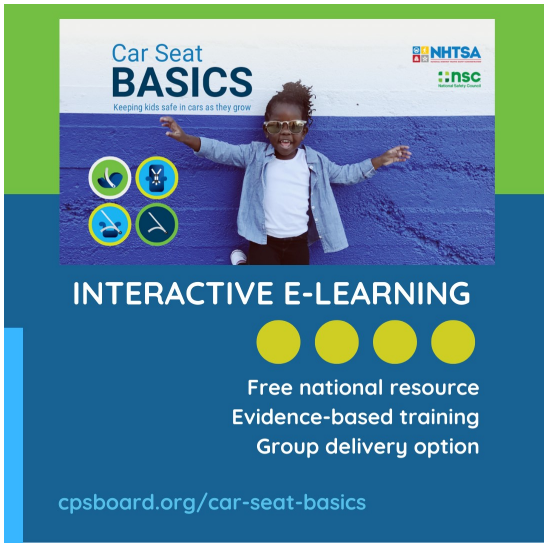


Seat Check Saturday is September 24th. You can search for a certified technician near you using NHTSA's Inspection Station Locator. Certified technicians will inspect your car seat free of charge, in most cases, and show you how to correctly install and use it.

Child Passenger Safety Resources and Trainings

Car Seat Basics

Car Seat Basics is a free national resource developed by NHTSA and NSC. Throughout the interactive e-learning, evidence-based education is provided on how to keep children safe in cars as they grow through completion of all or specific modules on rear-facing and forward-facing car seat use, as well as booster seat and seat belt use. Completion time is approx. 60 minutes. Proof of completion is provided after completion of all modules. A group delivery option is available with designated group admins having the ability to assign the training to and track completion progress of group members. Visit cpsboard.org/car-seat-basics for more information.



Hybrid National CPST Certification Training

Starting in July 2022, a hybrid offering of the *National Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training* will be available expanding the reach and accessibility of the nationally standardized certification training. The hybrid offering includes self-paced e-learning, virtual instructor-led sessions and in-person sessions and is designed to fit the learning styles and schedules of anyone who would benefit from a flexible instruction setting. In-person time commitment is approximately 1.5 days and includes hands-on activities and skills evaluations. CPS Instructors must earn an instructor hybrid endorsement to deliver the training. Visit cpsboard.org/hybrid for additional information.



Upcoming Conferences and Webinars

Colorado Traffic Safety Summit

Please join the Colorado Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office (CDOT HSO) on **July 18-20, 2022,** as they come together at this critical time to refresh and recalibrate our efforts to address traffic safety challenges in Colorado. You will be participating in exciting plenary sessions, engaging workshops, and networking. For more information and to register, please visit their website.



Drive Smart Virginia Distracted Driving Summit

The 9th Annual Distracted Driving Summit will be held on **August 18-19, 2022,** in Norfolk, Virginia. This annual conference focuses on how to tackle distracted driving. At the Distracted Driving Summit, hundreds of attendees hear experts from around the country talk about the most cutting-edge solutions for distracted driving. The Summit is a day-and-a-half event with both in-person and virtual attendee options. Register now online.



Kidz in Motion (KIM) Conference

The 16th Annual KIM Conference will be taking place **August 24-26, 2022,** in Orlando, Florida. This conference will focus on variety of topics related to Child Passenger Safety.

To learn more or register, visit their website: http://kidzinmotion.org/

Upcoming Conferences and Webinars

GHSA 2022 Annual Meeting

It's almost time! As of May 9, you can register for the GHSA 2022 Annual Meeting this **September 17-21,** in Louisville, Kentucky. Join fellow highway safety, law enforcement and public health professionals to learn about innovative new programs, discuss timely issues around transportation and equity, and browse the exhibit hall to see the latest technology. Expect a great lineup of speakers to inform, excite and inspire! More information is available on the GHSA website.



2023 Lifesavers Conference



The Lifesavers Conference will take place **April 2-4, 2023,** in Seattle, Washington. To learn more, watch the conference video on the conference website homepage. Next year's conference will contain more than 75 workshops from nine tracks addressing hot topics, latest trends, and cutting edge programs. They are now accepting Speaker Proposals. Online registration opens in early November.

Transportation Safety Institute Courses

The Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) offers a variety of professional development and training opportunities. To learn more and see all of their course options, check out the 2021 Course Catalog.



Recent Publications

Recent Publications from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA)

Traffic Safety Facts: Passenger Vehicles (DOT HS 813 323): In 2020 there were 23,824 passenger vehicle occupants who died in motor vehicle traffic crashes, a 6.5-percent increase from 22,372 in 2019. An estimated 2,034,844 passenger vehicle occupants were injured, a 17-percent decrease from 2,447,985 in 2019. Eighty-two percent of passenger vehicle occupants who were totally ejected from vehicles involved in fatal crashes in 2020 were killed.

Traffic Safety Facts: Young Drivers (DOT HS 813 313): In 2020 there were 1,885 young drivers who died in traffic crashes, a 17-percent increase from 1,616 in 2019. Of the young drivers killed with known restraint use, 52 percent were unrestrained at the time of the crashes in 2020, which is similar to the percentage of all drivers of passenger vehicles killed (51%).

Distracted Driving 2020 (DOT HS 813 309): Eight percent of fatal crashes, 14 percent of injury crashes, and 13 percent of all police-reported motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2020 were reported as distraction-affected crashes. In 2020 there were 3,142 people killed and an estimated additional 324,652 people injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.

Teens and Distracted Driving 2020 (DOT HS 813 315): In 2020, there were 239 distracted teen drivers 15 to 19 involved in fatal crashes. There were 265 people who died in crashes that involved distracted teen drivers, and there were 186 teens who were killed in distraction-affected crashes.

Seat Belt Use in 2021 — Use Rates in the States and Territories (DOT HS 813 307): In 2021, seat belt use in the United States ranged from 72.3 percent in the U.S. Virgin Islands to 97.2 percent in California. Twenty-three States, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands achieved seat belt use rates of 90 percent or higher.

Recent Publications

Recent Publications from NCSA (Continued)

2020 Children Traffic Safety Fact Sheet (DOT HS 813 285): Of the 38,824 traffic fatalities in 2020 in the United States, 1,093 (3%) were children 14 and younger. Child traffic fatalities increased by 3 percent from 2019 (1,064) to 2020 (1,093). An estimated 139,042 children were injured in traffic crashes in 2020, a 24-percent decrease from 183,166 in 2019.

To see all NCSA publications, visit https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov.

Recent Publications from the Office of Behavioral Safety Research

Fatal Crash Seat Belt Use Reporting and Awareness

In April 2022, NHTSA's Office of Behavioral Safety Research submitted an Information Collection Request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget seeking approval to collect information from 1,500 participants from two seat belt user groups, 750 who are full-time and 750 who are occasional or non-users, for a one-time voluntary experiment to understand whether the inclusion of seat belt status in a fatal crash news report could affect seat belt use. NHTSA will summarize the results of the collection using aggregate statistics in a final report to be distributed to NHTSA program and regional offices, State Highway Safety Offices, and other traffic safety stakeholders. This collection will inform the development of countermeasures, particularly in the areas of communications and outreach, for increasing seat belt use and reducing fatalities and injuries associated with the lack of seat belt use. The final report is expected in 2025.

For more information about this collection request, see: https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAViewICR?ref_nbr=202202-2127-003 or visit reginfo.gov and search ICRs for 202202-2127-003.

Recent Publications

Recent Publications from the Office of Behavioral Safety Research (Continued)

Synthesis of Studies That Relate Amount of Enforcement to Magnitude of Safety Outcomes

In June 2022, NHTSA's Office of Behavioral Safety Research released a new research study showing that high visibility enforcement (HVE) of traffic safety laws has a positive and measurable impact on roadway safety by reducing dangerous driving behaviors that put road users at risk. The synthesis of existing research examined data across 80 studies on the relationship between HVE efforts and safety outcomes, with a focus on the dangerous driving behaviors that are some of the greatest behavioral contributors to crash fatalities: not buckling up; speeding; and drunk, distracted and aggressive driving. The results indicate that for all targeted behaviors, the enforcement campaigns evaluated in the available literature were generally effective in improving safety outcomes. For occupant protection enforcement efforts, HVE campaigns produced on average a 3.5-percentage-point improvement in seat belt use rates. One additional checkpoint per 100,000 people per week in an HVE occupant protection campaign is expected to increase seat belt use by 0.76 percentage points.

The report, a summary Traffic Tech, and a technical appendix with additional details are available here:

Synthesis of Studies That Relate Amount of Enforcement to Magnitude of Safety Outcomes [Traffic Tech]

Synthesis of Studies That Relate Amount of Enforcement to Magnitude of Safety Outcomes

Synthesis of Studies that Relate Amount of Enforcement to Magnitude of Safety Outcomes - Technical Appendix

See also the GHSA press release: Research Confirms Roadway Safety Benefits of Traffic Enforcement.

Updates and Resources

Welcome Jessica Li

The Office of Impaired Driving and Occupant Protection welcomed a new STIPDG (Summer Transportation Internship Program for Diverse Groups) intern for the summer. Jess Li is a rising senior at the University of Virginia studying Global Public Health. She will be assisting with various division-related activities and projects through August.

Needed: Highway Safety Program Subject Matter Experts

Are you interested in helping State Highway Safety Offices strengthen traffic safety programs? The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) needs experienced traffic safety professionals to assess various elements of State highway safety programs, identify opportunities to expand efforts and initiatives among stakeholders, and assist in strategic planning. This brochure provides detailed information about the role of a subject matter expert on a NHTSA Safety Program Assessment Team, including qualifications and requirements, and how to get in touch to ask questions or express interest.

Sign up for Email Notifications of Child Seat Recalls

If you are not already signed up to receive email notifications when a child seat or vehicle is recalled, we encourage you to sign up on the NHTSA website. You can also register your child seat or file a child seat complaint on this page.

To update your contact information, please contact Melissa Ostergaard at Melissa.Ostergaard@dot.gov