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Restraint Use Rises to Record High Level For Infants and Toddlers

By Ellen Martin, Office of Communications and Consumer Information

February 10, 2003. Washington, D.C.

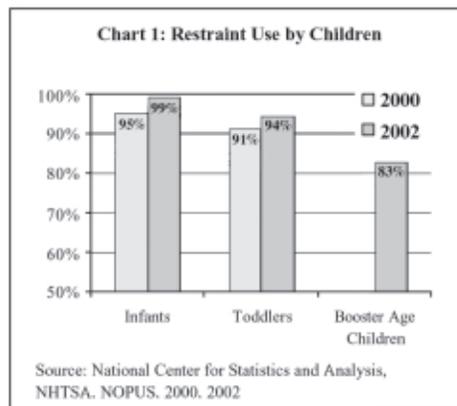
Restraint use among young children rose to a record level in 2002 according to estimates from a major survey conducted by NHTSA. An estimated 99 percent of infants under age one are now restrained, up 4 percentage points from 2000. Fully 94 percent of toddlers are now restrained, a 3 percentage point gain over two years ago. The new survey indicates that 83 percent of children ages four to seven are restrained. No comparable statistics are available for this age group from previous NHTSA surveys.

NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeff Runge released the new data during a press conference in Washington to promote Child Passenger Safety Week. The event was sponsored by the Air Bag & Seat Belt Safety Campaign, part of the National Safety Council. "Children are the most vulnerable passengers riding on America's roadways. It is extremely good news that more of them are now safely secured," Dr. Runge said.

However, Dr. Runge indicated serious concern about other findings from the survey, which shows that many young children continue to ride in the front seat. "Youngsters are at greater risk of severe injury or death when they're involved in a crash while riding in the front seat," Dr. Runge said. An estimated 15 percent of infants under age one now ride in a front seat position; 10 percent of toddlers ages one to three ride in the front; and 29 percent of youngsters ages four to seven do so.

Restraint use estimates are based on the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS), conducted periodically by NHTSA. The latest survey was conducted in June 2002 and its results were compared with a prior NOPUS survey done in the fall of 2000 which also tracked child restraint use.

Besides indicating increased restraint use



for infants and toddlers, the latest national survey also reached these key findings:

- The link between restraint use of drivers and their child passengers remains strong. More than 90 percent of belted drivers also restrain the children traveling in their

vehicles. Approximately 70 percent of unbelted drivers restrain their child passengers.

- Male drivers are restraining their children more often than they did two years ago, bringing them to near parity with female drivers. The 2000 survey indicated a seven percentage point disparity between men and women. That gap has now been narrowed to about 1 percentage point.
- Parents appear to be more aware of the need for appropriate restraint use based on the age and size of their children. The latest NOPUS survey indicates lower incidence of "premature graduation" in the use of restraint systems. Premature graduation involves transitioning children to the next stage of restraint system use before they are ready in terms of age or size. For example, infants are placed in forward-facing seats too soon, or children are moved from a

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NHTSA Administrator Runge Testifies on Sport Utility Vehicle Safety

February 26, 2003. United States Senate.

NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeff Runge appeared before the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation to testify about the safety of sport utility vehicles (SUVs.) He noted that the overall vehicle fleet has changed significantly from the fleet of 20 years ago; minivans and SUVs have replaced the fleet that was once dominated by passenger cars. While the overall fleet is safer, the new fleet composition presents new safety issues: rollover and compatibility.

While these two issues are at the top of NHTSA's vehicle safety agenda, Dr. Runge

stressed the importance of personal responsibility in highway safety—chiefly the use of seat belts and the reduction of the impaired driving problem which account for 41 percent of overall highway fatalities.

"We believe the issues of the vehicle and the driver are inextricably linked," said Dr. Runge. "Many of the deaths and injuries that could be prevented through vehicle performance standards can also be prevented through measures to improve driver performance."

For the complete text of Dr. Runge's testimony, please log on to www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hot/FinalSUVStatement.html. ■

Japan and the U.S. Sharing Traffic Safety Strategies

By Jeff Michael,
Director of the Impaired Driving and
Occupant Protection Office

Cultures may differ, but traffic safety problems are similar across the world. Basic behavioral issues such as impaired driving, safety belt use, pedestrian and bicycle safety are universal and present a worldwide public health problem.

In 1999, NHTSA and the National Police Agency (NPA) of Japan formed a partnership to share knowledge, technology, and experience in addressing these problems. The role of NPA in the Japanese government includes not only law enforcement, but also a range of traffic safety issues that mirror the behavioral programs in NHTSA, traffic management functions such as those addressed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and even some of the mass transit issues facing Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Initially, discussions between NHTSA and NPA focused on the post-crash aspects of the traffic safety problem. Establishing a connection through the Intelligent Transportation Systems World Congress, representatives of NHTSA and NPA recognized that each agency had information that could assist the other in their pursuit of improved response to traffic crashes. NPA was particularly interested in U.S. experience with technology for giving emergency vehicles priority through traffic signals, and the NHTSA EMS program was anxious to learn about Japan's use of real-

time navigation technology to speed the movement of ambulances through dense traffic.

A formal Cooperation Arrangement was established between NHTSA and the FTA in September 1999 to facilitate the exchange of information, and cooperation between agencies soon extended into other areas. In 2000, FHWA and FTA joined NHTSA in the partnership and NPA began supporting an



Norihiro Naritomi with NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeff Runge

internship program that allows Japanese government officials to spend a number of weeks in each of the DOT agencies.

Three NPA professionals have now served internships with NHTSA. In the fall of 2000, Mr. Seiji Koyanagi visited NHTSA, FHWA and FTA each for a period of six weeks. During his NHTSA visit, Mr. Koyanagi worked with the EMS Division on emergency vehicle traffic safety, conducting an international literature review regarding the

nature of ambulance crashes.

In a similar tour of agencies a year later, the EMS Division was visited by Mr. Yoshimi Tanaka, whose work focused on the wireless E9-1-1 problem facing both NHTSA and NPA. In fall 2002, NHTSA was visited by Mr. Yumiko Sugiuchi, who shared information regarding trauma system development. In addition to these short-term rotations, the Office of Program Development and Delivery is now hosting a year-long visit by Mr. Norihiro Naritomi, who is detailed to NHTSA until March 2003, working on an in-depth comparison of U.S. and Japanese traffic safety problems and countermeasures.

The NPA-NHTSA internship program and other activities under the Cooperation Arrangement are benefiting both the U.S. and Japan, as well as contributing to the diplomatic unity of the two nations. The partnership between governments is leading to cooperation among professional associations and corporations. The President of the U.S. National Association of State EMS Directors visited Japan in 2000 by invitation of NPA to review EMS-related technology innovations, and in early 2003 the President of the National Emergency Number Association will visit NPA in Tokyo to share details concerning the

implementation of wireless E9-1-1. Also as a result of the NHTSA-NPA cooperation, a dialog has been initiated between General Motors OnStar and the Japanese Mayday Corporation concerning implementation of automatic collision notification technology.

For further information on the Cooperation Arrangement, or if you would like to meet with an intern from NPA, contact Jeff Michael, Director of the Impaired Driving and Occupant Protection Office. ■

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child safety seat directly to an adult safety belt too soon, bypassing the booster-seat stage.

NHTSA has been gathering NOPUS statistics on restraint use since 1994. The latest numbers were derived from a survey conducted during a 20-day period beginning on June 3, 2002. NHTSA data collectors observed 3,500 children at 1,100 intersections throughout the U.S.

The margin of error of the survey for restraint use among children is plus or minus one percentage point for infants; plus or minus

3.6 percentage points for toddlers; and 5.6 percentage points for children ages four to seven.

The newly released NHTSA statistics are summarized in a research note on the agency's Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/childps/ChildRestraints/ChildRestraints.pdf. ■

Tools To Use...

NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) has released the research note "*The Use of Child Restraints in 2002*" (DOT HS 809 555). This note presents the

latest results on how frequently the nation's children under 8 years are restrained, the restraints they are using, and changes in restraint use from 2000. The results are from the National Occupant Protection Use Survey, which provides the only probability-based observed data on child restraint use on the nation's roadways.

This note is available on NCSA's web page at www.nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/RNotes/2003/ChildRestRN.pdf.

An accompanying power point presentation is available at www.nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/Rpts/2003/ChildRestraints.pdf.

NCSA also has placed their 2001 Quick Facts on Webster under the Tools category. Designed in a quick and easy-to-read format, it contains the most current and commonly asked questions regarding motor vehicle crash data.

National SAFE KIDS Launches National Program of Education



Knowledge and State Regulations, analyzed parents' knowledge and experiences regarding

February 6, 2003. Washington, DC. SAFE KIDS today launched a national program to educate child care providers on child passenger safety. The SAFE KIDS report, *Transportation in Child Care Settings: Parent*

children in child care, specifically as they relate to transportation practices. SAFE KIDS surveyed hundreds of parents of children ages 14 and under who were currently receiving child care and transported by their providers. The report also analyzed state child care transportation regulations.

NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeff Runge spoke at the news conference and reminded the audience to "Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time." ■



NHTSA Administrator Dr. Runge speaks at the National Safe Kids Campaign

Administrator Runge to Re-Emphasize Global Harmonization

On March 11–13, 2003, NHTSA Administrator Jeffrey Runge, M.D., will travel to Geneva, Switzerland, to address the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29). The NHTSA Administrator's participation in WP.29 will be a positive signal to other countries about the United States' commitment to improving vehicle safety and to the global harmonization of vehicle safety regulations. Dr. Runge will focus his remarks on the importance of manufacturers and governments to work together on solutions to some of today's vehicle safety challenges. He

will emphasize the importance of implementing the program of work of the 1998 Agreement. He also will stress the need for greater exchange of information among governments in areas such as compatibility and rollover as well as emerging technologies, such as hydrogen-powered vehicles. Dr. Runge also will meet with officials from the World Health Organization to discuss issues related to injury control initiatives and the potential collaboration between the two organizations in order to reduce crash related fatalities and injuries worldwide. ■

Triple Recognition for Jeff Michael



January 17, 2003. Congratulations to Jeff Michael, Ed.D., who was recognized by the National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Directors for his distinguished service to the emergency

medical services profession and his "outstanding contribution to our common enterprises, addressing challenges and advancing solutions to improve the public health care system; has reflected honor upon his name and ours, has served as inspiration, good counsel and friend, and will be enshrined always in our hearts and memories."

Jeff also was presented with a plaque in January from the National Association of EMS Physicians for his contributions in prehospital emergency care as the EMS Division Chief of NHTSA; and he also received a plaque from the National Association of EMS Educators in appreciation for leadership as EMS Division Chief, 1996–2002. ■

Colin Powell's Rules

Secretary of State General Powell says he always tries to keep in mind a number of rules or thoughts to live by, which he has come upon over the years. Here are some of them:

1. It ain't as bad as you think. It will look better in the morning.
2. Get mad, then get over it.
3. Avoid having your ego so close to your position that when your position fails, your ego goes with it.
4. It can be done!
5. Be careful what you choose. You may get it.
6. Don't let adverse facts stand in the way of a good decision.
7. Check small things.
8. Share credit.
9. You can't make someone else's choices. You shouldn't let someone else make yours.
10. Remain calm. Be kind.
11. Have a vision. Be demanding.
12. Don't take counsel of your fears or naysayers.
13. Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier.

—August 13, 1989. *Parade Magazine*

TEAM Recognizes Two NHTSA Employees

By Marilena Amoni,
Associate Administrator,
Program Development and Delivery

The TEAM (Techniques for Effective Alcohol Management) Coalition recognized NHTSA's own Susan Ryan and Valerie Gompf (Office of Program Development and Delivery) at an awards ceremony on January 22, 2003 in



Washington, DC. "Susan and Valerie's leadership and guidance helped build the TEAM Coalition to a viable, self-sufficient organization," said Jill Pepper, TEAM Coalition Executive Director. "The

dedication of these two public servants has brought major improvements to the Coalition's ability to achieve its mission of reducing alcohol-related incidents at public assembly facilities and ensuring that guests arrive and depart safely from the facility," said Pepper.

Susan and Valerie were both honored for "Outstanding Service to the TEAM Coalition." During the last six years (1996-2002), Susan and Valerie worked with the TEAM Coalition to achieve numerous successes, including: reorganizing the TEAM Coalition into a non-profit organization with an impressive list of contributing members such as Major League Baseball, National Football League, National Basketball Association, National Hockey League, Aramark, National Association of Broadcasters, the Beer Institute; revamping the TEAM alcohol management training program to make it a premier, self-sufficient, nationally recognized program; and, organizing the first league-wide TEAM training for all Major League Baseball clubs. As a result, the National Football League now has plans to fully implement the TEAM training program with their organizations.

TEAM has successfully facilitated many changes in alcohol management policies and practices that directly impact impaired driving in the last decade. TEAM has educated stadium personnel about facility policies regarding responsible alcohol distribution and consumption and in identifying the warning signs of intoxication in patrons of sporting and entertainment events. Much of what TEAM has accomplished is, in part, due to the contributions of NHTSA, and particularly the work of Susan Ryan and Valerie Gompf. ■



Susan Ryan

Valerie Gompf

Barbara Sauers Promoted To Division Chief

Congratulations to Barbara Sauers on her promotion to Division Chief of the Communication Services Division in the Office of Communications and Consumer Information. Barb brings a variety of experience and knowledge to this position.

Barbara began her career at NHTSA in 1988 while in graduate school through the graduate student cooperative program. While at NHTSA she has worked in a regional office, Traffic Safety Programs (TSP) in the Safety Countermeasures and Impaired Driving Divisions, Regional Operations/State and

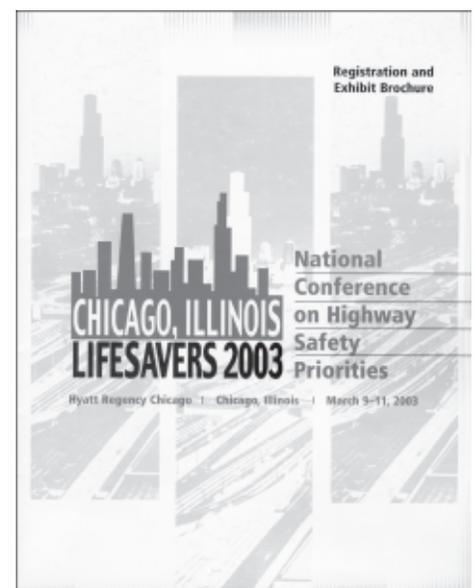
Community Services, National Outreach Division, Media & Marketing Division, and Consumer Information Division. Her program areas include pedestrian and bicycle safety, public health, Safe Communities, impaired driving prevention, the Buckle Up America (BUA) campaign (manager), and the leader of the IPT on safety belts.

She holds a BS in Health Education and an MPS in Policy Studies. Prior to NHTSA, Barbara managed the residential portion of a program in Baltimore serving mentally retarded adults.

She is married; likes to cook, garden, read murder mysteries, and spend time with her dog and cat.

Congratulations, Barb! ■

Lifesavers 2003 Conference Highlights in the Next Issue of NHTSA Now



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Kathryn Henry
Editor

If you would like to submit articles or photographs, please email them to khenry@nhtsa.dot.gov; or mail them to 400 7th Street, SW., Suite 5232, Washington DC 20590.