

Course Complete!

Recently, three NHTSA employees received their certification as child passenger safety technicians - Darlene Curtin (NPO-502), Dee Williams (NPO-310), and Joy Thompson (NVS-130). Each attended and fulfilled the 32 hour course requirements



Darlene (left) and Dee (right) at Fitzgerald Automotive's (Rockville, MD) July 10, 2003 Child Safety Seat Checkup Event.

designed to educate participants (according to best practice guidelines) on the: selection and securement of children in age appropriate child restraint systems (CRSs); installation of different modes of CRSs in multiple types of motor vehicles; the ability to instruct others on the correct installation of CRSs in a motor vehicle; and the ability to instruct others on how to properly restrain a child in an age appropriate child restraint system which has been correctly installed in a motor vehicle.

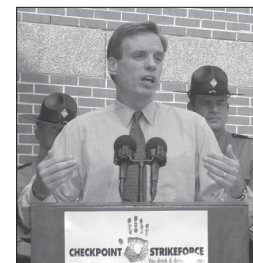
At the completion of the course, Darlene, Dee and Joy had to pass both written and performance evaluations to receive certification. In addition, each had to participate in a child safety seat checkup event, which was held at Fitzgerald Automotive in Rockville, Maryland. There, they along with other certified child

passenger safety technicians, assisted parents, guardians and caretakers in inspecting and properly installing child safety seats in their respective motor vehicles.

Checkpoint Strikeforce Gets Top Billing in Virginia

Late August 2003. Police are promising more sobriety checkpoints across Virginia and they're spending half a million dollars on ads to raise awareness about the problem. Governor Mark Warner said, "This week, the weekend, and for the coming weeks, if you drive drunk, we're going to find you, we're going to arrest you, and we're going to get you off the road".

At an afternoon news conference before Labor Day weekend, traditionally a deadly time on highways, Warner also highlighted police efforts to catch drunken drivers in the ongoing Checkpoint Strikeforce program. He promised that



Virginia Governor Mark Warner warns motorists that if they Drink & Drive. They Lose.

there would be at least one checkpoint every week from now until the end of the year. Reminders of the drunk-driving crackdown will be as close as the car radio. The state has sent public service ads to 52 radio stations

statewide, including a Spanish-language version.

One, with a "Twilight Zone" theme playing softly in the background, has a Rod Serling sound-alike warning, "Your imagination races ahead-to-your arrest, court appearance, losing your license. Life as you know it is suddenly altered. Your next stop: the checkpoint zone."

Another, a parody of MasterCard's familiar spots, gets right to the bottom line: "Cost of a good drunk-driving lawyer, \$1,500. Loss of your driver's license? Priceless."

The ultimate message of the program is, "If you drink and drive in Virginia, you will lose."

Secretary Mineta

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this was an all-hands meeting in the maritime tradition. Let me finish my remarks to you by changing that description.

This is not an all-hands meeting, it is a call to general quarters.

"All hands - man your battle stations."

God bless each and every of you as we begin this fight in earnest. May God continue to bless the United States of America. I know with your commitment and your energy, you will not let this great nation down.

"Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living; the other helps you make a life."

-Sandra Carey

NHTSA'S Derrick "Tony" Lewis Entertains on the Plaza During the Summer Concert Series



July 2003.

Thursdays in the summer months are known to employees at the Nassif building as a time to relax in the courtyard with lunch and great music. On a recent summer Thursday, NHTSA's own Derrick Lewis

filled the plaza with the jazz sounds from his saxophone.

Derrick has studied music since high school and advanced his music education at St. Augustine College in Raleigh, North Carolina, where he attended on a music scholarship and played with a jazz band. After graduation, he returned to Washington, D.C. to continue his music career at the University of the District of Columbia. He has studied with Najee, Grover Washington, Jr., and is a member of the United States Coast Guard Cutters Stage Band of Washington, D.C.

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Kathryn Henry, Editor

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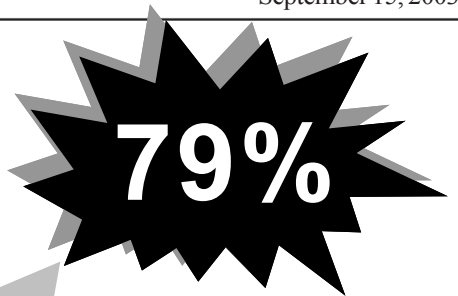
If you would like to submit articles or photographs, please email them to khenry@nhtsa.dot.gov; or mail them to 400 7th Street, SW, Suite 5232, Washington, DC 20590.



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Safety Belt Use Reaches National Record-Level



August 25, 2003. U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta today announced that safety belt use in the United States has reached 79 percent - the highest level in the nation's history.



Every region of the country registered increases in belt use since 2002, according to a new NHTSA survey. The nationwide survey was conducted after the massive "Click It or Ticket" mobilization in May, the largest-ever nationwide law enforcement effort to increase safety belt use.

"We should all be proud of the efforts that went into this historic accomplishment," Secretary Mineta said. "But, make no mistake about it, our work is not done yet. The Bush administration is commit-

ted to safety as its highest transportation priority, and we will not be satisfied until everyone buckles up for every trip."

NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeffrey Runge addressed the historic, high belt usage statistics at the Governors Highway Safety Association's (GHSA) annual meeting in New Orleans.

Both Secretary Mineta and Administrator Runge credited the hard work of the state highway safety offices, state and local law enforcement agencies, advocacy groups and public/private sector partners, including the Air Bag & Seat Belt Safety Campaign for the increase in belt use.

The May enforcement mobilization was, for the first time, supplemented by an almost \$25 million state and national media campaign. More than 12,000 law enforcement agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico conducted safety belt checkpoints and other special law enforcement activities as part of the campaign.

"This was a prodigious nationwide effort with broad support and enthusiasm from national, state and local governments and the private sector. The nation is indebted to all for their hard work," said Dr. Runge.

According to NHTSA estimates, the increase in belt use this year will translate into more than 1,000 lives saved each year the gains are sustained. In addition, the costs to society are reduced by at least \$3.2 billion.

Restraint use estimates are based on the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS), conducted annually by NHTSA. The previous survey in June 2002 found nationwide belt use at 75 percent. The scientific survey is based on observations at 2,000 sites nationwide.

Additional key findings of the latest NOPUS survey include the following:

- States with primary safety belt laws averaged 83 percent belt usage while states with secondary laws averaged 75 percent. Twenty states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have primary belt laws.
- Pickup truck occupants registered the lowest usage rate - 69 percent - among passenger vehicles.
- Occupants of sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and vans registered the highest use rate - 83 percent.
- Usage is lowest in the Northeast (74 percent) followed by the Midwest at 75 percent. Belt use is highest in the West (84 percent) and South (80 percent).

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 in June 2003.

The margin of error for the survey on the national estimates of restraint use is plus

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Secretary Mineta leads the charge in ratcheting up efforts to increase the number of people using safety belts and reduce the number of impaired drivers. Seated at right is Chief of Staff John Flaherty, seated at left are Annette Sandberg, Administrator, FMCSA; Dr. Jeff Runge, Administrator, NHTSA; Mary Peters, Administrator, FHWA.

Secretary Mineta Holds All Hands Meeting with NHTSA, FMCSA, and FHWA - Sets Agenda for Next 18 Months

July 16, 2003. Washington, DC.

Text of message:

I want to thank everyone for taking time out of your busy schedules to come here today.

This event has been called an "all hands" meeting. In the maritime tradition, when a commanding officer has something of the utmost importance to convey, he would call all hands to muster and then address the ship's crew.

That's what I would like to do today - talk to you about something vitally important, and to make a request of each of you.

I look back at my two and a half years leading this Department, and I see how much we have accomplished - how hard we have worked over this period of time.

Now, this is not the agenda we wrote for ourselves. But it is the one that history has given to us. And now it is time to acknowledge that history is calling us to another important task. It is no less important than others that we've had, and the stakes are no less significant.

It is the battle to stop the death and injury on our roads and highways.

This is a battle for which many of you have volunteered. It is one many of you have been fighting. For many of you, it is the calling that has brought you to this Department - it is the passion that fuels your work here.

Well, the rest of us are going to join you in that passion and that calling. This is an all-hands muster because I want everyone to know in your agencies - in this Depart-

ment - that our top priority for the next 18 months is to use every tool available to reduce death and injury on our highways.

The Department of Transportation has performed magnificently in providing for the security for Americans traveling. We now have to pivot and shift that energy and passion to providing for the safety of the traveling American.

The mission is very simple: Reduce death and injury. The measure of success is just as simple: Increase the number of people using safety belts and reduce the number of impaired drivers.

If we do that, we win. If we fail - Americans will continue to die on our nation's roads in unnecessary and preventable crashes.

To accomplish our goal, we must choose to end the acceptance of death on our roads. More than 40,000 people last year died on our watch. Newcomers to the statistic of this slaughter try and describe it in a way that startles the listener.

They say, "It's like a 737 crashing every day of the year." Or, "It's a small American town wiped out every year".

While both of these comparisons are tragically true, those of us who have worked on this issue know there is something more insidious about this battle.

It is the banality of these events that works to defeat our efforts. It is the everyday, every minute crash that happens so often, so steadily, that it is no longer newsworthy except to the people whose lives are devastated.

It is not the drama of a 737 plane crash everyday. It is the crashing of a thousand cars a day.

Every day, across the nation, the alarm sounds in a thousand firehouses, a radio call goes to a thousand police officers, and the doors to the emergency departments and trauma centers swing open thousands of times.

And everyday, right this minute, this afternoon, late tonight - a telephone will ring, a doorbell will be rung, a police officer will show up at an office or at a home to tell someone that the person they kissed good-bye that morning is not coming home ever again.

My colleagues, providence has given us an opportunity to change that history. If we do our jobs, fewer calls will be made. If we succeed, thousands will never know this pain and heartache. That's the job before us.

We do not fool ourselves into thinking we

can stop all crashes. We accept the reality of our world where vehicles will crash into one another unintentionally, and people will be killed and people will be injured.

But what we do not accept is that people can drive without buckling up, or that they can drive impaired. And that is something we intend to do something about it.

We are going to work to pass laws that require Americans to buckle up. We are going to work on methods and practices that lower the number of impaired drivers. Enforcement works, we'll support it. We know it does.

At the same time, we intend to educate drivers to buckle up and to drive sober, and we intend to engineer and use innovative new ways to reduce death and injury on the road.

As someone who's been in public service for more than forty years, whether as a mayor, or as a Member of Congress, or as a Cabinet Secretary, I have learned that the team you are working with has but a brief moment to create a legacy for the public we serve.

Colleagues, let us make this one of our legacies. Let our accomplishment be that we reduce the number of times those firefighters, those troopers, those paramedics, those doctors, and those nurses have to look at another broken body.

Most of you know that I have

spent a fair amount of my time in a hospital this past year. I have seen the pain and the suffering of those unnecessary casualties of car crashes.

We can change that. I pledge my remaining time as your Secretary to helping you fight this fight.

I am asking for your commitment - a promise from you to spend your time, and your energy, in this fight.

It will not be easy. We will not be given every tool there is for this fight - we may not even be given the best tools. But that should not stop us - it cannot stop us - because too much is at stake.

I started out these remarks saying that

"Our top priority for the next 18 months is to use every tool available to reduce death and injury on our highways."

- Secretary Mineta

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Med Students at NHTSA

Through a program with the American Medical Association and Cornell University, NHTSA has two medical students working with us in a summer internship program. The goal of this program is to broaden the professional perspectives of future physicians and expose them to the applied science of injury control. This year we are fortunate to have two medical students with us.

Alyssa Hackett - Alyssa is a first year medical student at Ohio State University. She is developing a Resource Book for the Impaired Driving Division that focuses in Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) testing, as it relates to people brought to emergency departments or trauma centers after alcohol-related crashes. She is also writing an article for the *Annals of Emergency Medicine*.

Ted Schuman - Ted is a first year medical student at Cornell University. He is working with the Crash Injury Research & Engineering Network (CIREN) program, and is developing a handbook for the CIREN centers that will enhance their methods for standardized recording of medical information into the CIREN database.

Alyssa and Ted can be found in 5119Q. If you have any questions about the summer internship program for medical students, please contact Laurie Flaherty at 366-2705.

Safety Belt Use

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or minus 1.2 percentage points. The newly released NHTSA survey results can be found on the agency's website at: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/Rpts/2003/SafetyBelt2003.pdf>.

Virginia Transportation Safety Board Recognizes The Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network (CIREN) Center at Inova Fairfax Hospital

By Catherine McCullough, Research and Development

The Honda Inova Fairfax CIREN Center has received a Certification of Recognition by the Virginia Transportation Safety Board for their continued commitment and dedication to transportation safety in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This commitment has been greatly enhanced by their involvement in CIREN.

CIREN is a collaborative ongoing research effort at 10 level one trauma centers strategically located across the United States. Seven of these centers are funded by NHTSA and three are privately funded.

According to Dr. Samir M. Fakhry, the CIREN Center at Inova Fairfax is a unique collaboration of many disciplines striving to save lives on the roadways of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The information gleaned from motor vehicle crashes investigated by CIREN is utilized to educate and train medical professionals, law enforcement, first responders, automobile engineers, and newly licensed drivers in an attempt to reduce injury severity and crash outcomes. Although progress continues apace, much remains to be done in enhancing the safety of our roads and vehicles. Our CIREN center has provided us with exceptional opportunities to pursue state of the art research into highway and vehicle safety and to do this in our own "backyard". In many ways it has placed our collaborators and us in a position to learn more about this important field, share the available information generated nationally and locally with our partners and our community and be active participants in generating new knowledge about motor vehicle

crashes and occupant injuries. Although most of us do not think much of getting into our car and driving to work or to our home, this seemingly innocuous act can lead to what is the number one killer of people up to the age of 45 years: motor vehicle crashes. There has never been a time when our obligation to providing safer vehicles and roadways has been greater. It is well established that injury prevention is by far the best way to ensure the safety of our communities. CIREN is a very important addition to our armamentarium and the research generated by the network will surely enhance injury prevention throughout our state and nation.

Located in Falls Church, Virginia at the Inova Fairfax Hospital, the Inova Regional Trauma Center (IRTC) is the busiest trauma center in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the only Level I Trauma Center in Northern Virginia. In 2002 the Trauma Center treated more than 2,700 severely injured patients with two thirds of patients injured in motor vehicle crashes. The IRTC is committed to decreasing trauma-related death and disability through education, outreach, prevention, and research to improve the quality of life for everyone in the community. Seventy-three percent of the patients treated at the IRTC are from Fairfax County, which is a relatively affluent community with a high percentage of new vehicles in use at any one time. This provides for a higher probability of encountering new vehicle safety technology and makes the region an ideal location for vehicle safety research such as CIREN.

Will Minnesota's impaired drivers enjoy being tested in the revamped BATMobile?

Or will they find it a sobering artistic experience?

Stay tuned! Same Minnesota time, same Minnesota roads.

