

**Unrestrained Vehicle Occupant  
CHSP Emphasis Area  
Virtual Meeting Agenda**  
Wednesday, March 13, 2024



**Attendees:**

Sai Patapati, Traffic Safety Data Analyst, State Highway Traffic Safety Section (SHTSS), MDT  
Koren Bloom, EMS coordinator, AMR- Billings, Safe Kids Yellowstone County  
Jennifer Wilson, Occupant Protection Program, SHTSS, Planning Division, MDT  
Maureen Ward, Injury Prevention Coordinator, EMS & TS, DPHHS  
Sheila Cozzie, Cultural Liaison/SOAR Program/Teen Program, SHTSS, MDT  
Sgt John Spencer, Training, Montana Highway Patrol (MHP)  
Spencer Harris, LE Liaison & EMS Grants, SHTSS, MDT  
Steve Schmidt, Drive Safe Missoula, Ci-Co Health Department  
Terry Mullins, EMS & Trauma Systems Section Supervisor, DPHHS  
Tracie Kiesel, Tri-County Buckle Up (L&C, Broadwater & Jefferson) BUMT Coordinator, MT CPS Training Coordinator  
Kevin Dusko SHTSS Supervisor, MDT  
Tammy Ross, Bureau Chief, Transit & Safety Planning Bureau Chief, MDT  
Meagan Brunelle, Cascade County BUMT Coordinator

The purpose of this meeting is to report on strategy implementation, benchmark accomplishments, and efforts to enhance awareness and importance of using vehicle safety restraints and reduce unrestrained vehicle occupant related deaths and serious injuries.

**Strategy/ Benchmark Updates- All Team Members**

**Strategy 1: Law & Enforcement**

*S1.2 Continue to support Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) & SETT efforts at the state and local level focusing on unrestrained vehicle occupants among other risky driving behaviors.*

Spencer Harris reported in FFY 2023, cumulative STEP program of 1,200 + citation and 8,000 hours of which

- 20 were seat belt citations.

**Strategy 2: Communication, Education & Injury Prevention**

*S2.1 Sustain and grow the community-based Buckle Up Montana (BUMT) program.*

BUMT coordinators report that it is business as usual, Alive at 25 classes continue to be scheduled.

*S2.2: Sustain and grow the Safe On All Roads - SOAR - Tribal community program focusing on seat belt and child passenger seat use.*

Sheila Cozzie reported the program will receive a GHSA grant in 2024. In FFY 2024 to date:

- Poster concepts are being finalized w/ Duft Watterson.
- Sports campaign should roll out in Feb-Mar. Sports campaign should roll out in Feb-Mar.

*S2.3: Sustain and grow the Teen Traffic Safety Program*

Sheila Cozzie reported that unlike previous years, this year there weren't additional funding sources from other organizations. Sheila presented teen traffic safety grant opportunities at the annual FCCLA conference, and reported

- Six (6) FCCLA charter groups submitted applications.

*S2.4: Sustain and grow the Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Certification Training Program and inspection stations in Montana with increased focus on high-risk populations.*

Efforts to sustain the program include regularly scheduled instructor meetings, monthly newsletters and webinars, and the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Tech Update scheduled for May 2, 2024, in Helena. In FFY 2024 there will be 4, possibly 5 Child Passenger Safety Trainings (CPST) courses planned.

### **Strategy 3: Improve Unrestrained Vehicle Occupant Data**

#### *S3.2 Continue to evaluate behavioral surveys on occupant restraint use to include teen and adult behavior,*

Dwight Nelson shared the Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which is conducted by OPI, and is a self-reported safety behavior survey by MT youth used to identify the leading causes of mortality, morbidity, and social problems among youth. The 2023 YRBS link is [https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/PageFiles/YRBS/Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2-22-2024.pdf](https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/PageFiles/YRBS/Youth%20Risk%20Behavior%20Survey%202-22-2024.pdf) The self-reporting behavior includes seat belts, alcohol use, and electronic device use while driving and are found on pages 48-49. In 2023,

- 54% responded they DID NOT always wear a seat belt when riding in a car.
- 29.5 % responded Did not ALWAYS wear a seat belt when driving a car.
- 21.6% Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol (past 30 days.)
- 5.8% reported that they drove when they had been drinking alcohol (past 30 days.)
- 58.2% reported they had Texted or emailed while driving a car or other vehicle (past 30 days).
- 53.5% reported they Used the Internet or Apps on their phone while driving (past 30 days)

#### *S3.3 Child Passenger Car Seat data collection on use and misuse of child safety restraints and distribution of car seats.*

Yellowstone County Safe Kids representative Koren Bloom reported in FFY 2023,

- 231 car seats were checked, and 81 car seats were distributed to families in need. The average misuse rate was 93%.

#### *S3.4 Research underlying beliefs and behaviors of high-risk groups to better understand their traffic safety behaviors. (Traffic Safety Culture Pooled Fund Studies (TSCPFS) program)*

This program is a cooperative effort of participating state DOTs and other organizations vested in traffic safety. The purpose of this effort is to accelerate the development and delivery of tools and services to transform traffic safety culture.

Tammy Ross reported the pool funded studies program is wrapping up phase II. A solicitation for phase III has been requested. The phase III scope of work will focus on conducting research to address culturally based traffic safety programs; create training and educational materials to enhance workforce understanding and application of traffic safety culture methods; and provide technology transfer of best practices and traffic safety culture methods to all stakeholders. Currently there are 3 projects ongoing,

- [Understanding Aggressive Driving and Ways to Reduce It - Phase 1](#)
- [Resources and Tools to Improve Pedestrian Safety](#)
- [Resources and Tools to Reduce Multi-Risk Driving Behaviors](#)

### **Upcoming Trainings & Announcements**

- Submittal of Occupant Protection mini-grant applications- year-round.
- 2024 Child Passenger Safety Tech Training [Child Passenger Safety Training Dates & Locations](#)
- 2024 Lifesavers Conference, Denver, April 7-9<sup>th</sup>
- 2024 Montana Traffic Education Association (MTEA) Conference, Great Falls, Heritage Inn, April 28-30<sup>th</sup>
- Annual CPS Instructors meeting at the Helena Knights of Columbus, May 1<sup>st</sup>
- Annual May Tech Update at the Helena Knights of Columbus on May 2<sup>nd</sup>
- 2024 Annual Transportation Safety Meeting, Delta Colonial, Helena Oct. 15, 16, & 17<sup>th</sup>
- Next Meeting- June 11<sup>th</sup>
  - National Digital Car Seat Check Form (NDCSCF) Update- Tracie Kiesel

For reference:

CHSP [2020 Montanas Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan \(mt.gov\)](#)

Workplan [Unrestrained Vehicle Occupants Emphasis Area | Montana Department of Transportation \(MDT\) \(mt.gov\)](#)