

NHTSA Teen Seat Belt Pilot Project in Colorado

The Teen Seat Belt Pilot Project is sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and is being conducted in two states; Colorado and Nevada. The Pilot Teen Seat Belt Project will be managed by NHTSA and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Safety Education and Enforcement Programs-Occupant Protection Unit.

Problem: Teens have higher fatality and injury rates in motor vehicle crashes than any other age group. One of the most effective measures a teen can take to prevent injury and death in a crash is to wear a seat belt, but the majority of fatally injured teens are not buckled up.

Project objectives: NHTSA and CDOT will be conducting a statewide teen seat belt campaign emphasizing countermeasures known to increase seat belt use, that are tailored to teens, on a large enough scale to produce significant improvement in seat belt use for this age group. The campaign will include: high-visibility enforcement, messages and materials tailored towards teens and their families regarding enforcement of seat belt laws and parental monitoring of teen seat belt use.

This project will closely follow the format of the NHTSA "CIOT Next Generation" project, where we test an enhanced model of "Click It or Ticket" (CIOT). This model builds on the existing CIOT mobilization by adding additional enforcement periods, coupled with paid and earned media. In this case, the enforcement and media CIOT activities will be tailored to the teen audience.

CDOT will be awarded \$600,000, for the entire project, to complete the enforcement and coalition/community activities.

The project activities will include:

- **Enforcement** – Colorado State Patrol and local law enforcement in 10 targeted counties (Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, Larimer, Mesa, Pueblo and Weld). There will be four waves of enforcing Colorado's seat belt laws, with a primary focus on enforcing the GDL seat belt law. The first of the four one-week enforcement periods is planned to begin in October 2007, with the last enforcement wave to be conducted in May 2008.
- **Coalition activities** – For each enforcement wave, CDOT will award mini-grants to local traffic safety coalitions and youth based organizations and groups to conduct community-based activities to educate the public about CIOT enforcement in their communities.
- **Media** – NHTSA's communication contractors will be responsible for development of all messaging, creative, media production (television, radio, print), development of media buy plans and other technical assistance as necessary.
- **Data Analysis and Project Evaluation** - NHTSA evaluators will develop the evaluation design, collect observation and public awareness data, analyze the data, provide technical support, and prepare interim and final reports for the project.

If you have any questions or are interested in participating in the Colorado NHTSA Teen Seat Belt Pilot Project, please contact:

Leslie Chase
CDOT - Occupant Protection Program Manager
4201 E. Arkansas Avenue, 3rd Floor
Denver, CO 80222
303-512-5003
leslie.chase@dot.state.co.us