

SAFETY Network

January 2014

Michigan.gov/ohsp

NHTSA proposes first-ever side impact test for child restraint systems



The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recently proposed upgrades to the federal motor vehicle safety standard for child-restraint systems to ensure child passengers are protected in side crashes. The proposed upgrades would include a first-ever side impact test for car seats sold in the U.S. that are designed for children weighing up to 40 pounds.

In the proposed test simulating a side-impact vehicle crash, car seats must demonstrate they can safely restrain a child by preventing harmful head contact with an intruding vehicle door and reducing the crash forces transmitted to the child's head and chest. NHTSA estimates that the proposal would save five lives and prevent 64 injuries annually.

Under the proposal, car seats would be tested in a specially designed sled test that simulates a "T-bone" crash, where the front of a vehicle traveling 30 mph strikes the side of a small passenger vehicle traveling at 15 mph. The sled test is the first of its

Continued on page 3 >

Nearly 3,000 vehicles stopped during three-month TACT program

Officers from six West Michigan law enforcement agencies stopped nearly 3,000 vehicles and issued more than 2,500 traffic citations during the Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks (TACT) program last October, November, and December.

The majority of the citations were for following too close and speeding. Approximately 14 percent of those cited were commercial motor vehicle drivers.

The TACT program combined outreach and education with enforcement activities for safe driving around trucks. Participating officers were on the lookout for violations by both passenger vehicle and truck drivers such as improper lane use, careless and reckless driving, speed-

ing, following too close, and failure to yield the right of way.

Enforcement took place on U.S. 131 and I-196 in Kent and Ottawa counties. The Grand Rapids area was selected after a review of crash data showed high crash rates associated with aggressive behavior.

OHSP supported the TACT program with funds from the Federal Motor Carrier

Continued on page 3 >



Michigan helmet use rate drops to 73 percent

Nearly three-quarters of motorcycle riders in Michigan wear helmets, down from 99.4 percent in 2006 when the last statewide observation survey was conducted. The most recent survey was conducted throughout the summer by the Wayne State University Transportation Research Group.

This rate closely mirrors the 74.7 percent helmet use rate among crash-involved motorcyclists.

Helmet use was highest for those riding sport bikes at 94.8 percent. It was lowest for riders of choppers and custom bikes at 37.5 percent. Women were more likely to wear a helmet at 79 percent, compared to men at 70.6 percent. Riders 60 and older had the highest helmet use rate at 73.5 percent, while riders 30 to 59 years old had the lowest use rate at 65.5 percent.

Michigan's mandatory helmet law was modified in the spring of 2012. To legally ride without a helmet, a motorcycle operator must meet all the following criteria:

- Be at least 21 years old

Continued on page 3 >

SAFETY Network



Updated brochure about dangers of underage drinking now available

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning recently updated its brochure *Under 21?* This free publication contains information about the penalties underage drinkers face if they are caught driving with alcohol in their system or with alcohol in their possession. These types of citations can impact students' futures as colleges, military recruiters, and employers may take alcohol-related offenses into consideration when accepting applications or hiring.

Copies of the brochure can be ordered by calling (517) 636-4256 or e-mailing a request to trafficsafety@michigan.gov.

New regional sobriety court program offered in the Upper Peninsula

A new regional sobriety court in the western Upper Peninsula (U.P.) is making it easier for offenders to participate in a program that has been credited with reducing impaired driving recidivism.

The Western U.P. Regional Sobriety Court includes both the 97th and 98th District Courts, which cover Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Keewenaw, and Ontonogon counties.

As the number of sobriety courts has increased, so have the obstacles for getting offenders into treatment. Typically, a drunk driver has to be arrested in the same court jurisdiction they live in to qualify for a sobriety court program. Michigan's Judicial Outreach Liaison, retired Judge Patrick Bowler, has been working with court personnel to establish four regional sobriety courts. These courts allow offenders to participate in the program closest to their home as opposed to the jurisdiction in which they were arrested. This lessens the burden on the offender, who typically has his/her license revoked during the first few months in the program.

Sobriety courts address alcohol disorders, which can be the underlying behavior of drunk driving, by guiding offenders identified as alcohol- and drug-addicted into treatment that reduces their substance use dependence and improves their quality of life. In the typical sobriety

court program, participants are closely supervised by a judge who is supported by a team of addiction treatment providers, prosecuting attorneys, public defenders, law enforcement officers, and parole and probation officers.

There are currently 16 offenders participating in the U.P. program. Judge Mark Wisti of the 97th District Court estimates that 500 days of jail time have been saved by having the offenders enrolled in the sobriety court program.

"This is not easier than going to jail," Judge Wisti said. "They're constantly tested. It's not hugs for thugs."

Court programs in northern and west Michigan and the "Thumb" are expected to be up and running later this year.

Wisti believes the program only has room to grow as defendants who enter the court system with a substance abuse problem will receive treatment instead of incarceration. Wisti also cites the team approach as a key to the program's success. The western U.P. program is a partnership with the Phoenix House substance abuse treatment facility, Dial Help, Self-Management and Recovery Training, Copper Country Mental Health, Houghton County Sheriff's Office, prosecutors, and defense attorneys.

Spring drunk driving crackdown kicks off March 12

Law enforcement agencies in 26 counties will take to the streets during a *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* drunk driving crackdown March 12-April 4.

This time period includes the National Collegiate Athletic Association men's and women's basketball tournaments, high school and college spring break periods, and St. Patrick's Day. A five-year review of

crash data indicates both alcohol use and lack of seat belts play a significant role in fatal and serious injury crashes in March and early April.

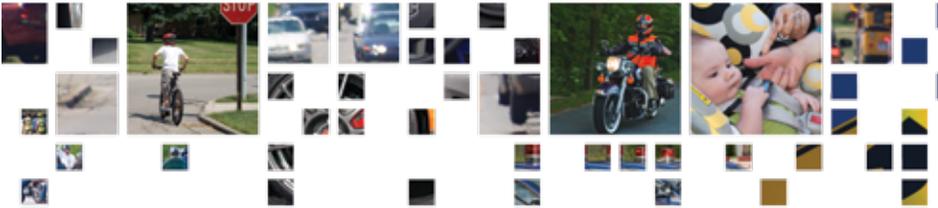
Law enforcement officers from Allegan, Berrien, Calhoun, Chippewa, Delta, Eaton, Genesee, Grand Traverse, Houghton, Ingham, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Livingston, Macomb, Marquette, Monroe,

Muskegon, Oakland, Ogemaw, Ottawa, Saginaw, St. Clair, Van Buren, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties are participating in the crackdown. The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning is coordinating the effort which is supported by federal traffic safety funds.



SAFETY Network

19TH ANNUAL MICHIGAN TRAFFIC SAFETY SUMMIT 2014



Register now for the Michigan Traffic Safety Summit

Online registration is now open for the Michigan Traffic Safety Summit which is March 25–27 at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center in East Lansing.

The three-day conference will include speakers from across the country and more than 25 workshops on child passenger safety, commercial motor vehicle safety, impaired driving, motorcycle safety, traffic enforcement, vehicle and roadway engineering, and much more.

Attendee and nonprofit exhibitor registration is \$85 on or before February 28 and \$125 after February 28. For-profit exhibitor registration is \$250 on or before February

28 and \$395 after February 28. Attendees and exhibitors must register through Mi.train.org. March 7 is the registration deadline for exhibitors. The registration deadline for attendees is March 14.

Attendees and exhibitors must make their own hotel reservations and are responsible for payment of their lodging. The Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center is the official hotel for the Michigan Traffic Safety Summit. Rooms are available for \$75 per night by using group code TSS032414. Reservation deadline is February 21.

For more information, visit Michigan.gov/ohsp.

TACT *Continued from page 3 >*

Safety Administration and the Michigan Truck Safety Commission dedicated for this purpose. The participating agencies included the Michigan State Police, Kent

and Ottawa county sheriff offices, and Grand Rapids, Walker, and Wyoming police departments.

Helmet *Continued from page 3 >*

- Have at least \$20,000 in first-party medical benefits
- Have held a motorcycle endorsement for at least two years or have passed an approved motorcycle safety course

The law also allows motorcycle passengers to ride without a helmet as long as they meet all the following criteria:

- Are at least 21 years old
- Have at least \$20,000 in first-party medical benefits insurance in addition to the insurance that is required of the motorcycle operator

A person younger than 21 years old still must wear a helmet approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation when operating or riding on a motorcycle.

Side Impact *Continued from page 1 >*

kind in the world being proposed for regulation, as it simulates both the acceleration of the struck vehicle and the vehicle door crushing toward the car seat. In addition to using an existing 12-month-old child dummy, the proposed test will also utilize a newly developed side-impact dummy representing a 3-year-old child. The agency proposed a three-year timeframe for car-seat manufacturers to make any necessary changes to meet the proposed requirements upon final rule publication.

What's Ahead

FEBRUARY

- 6 **Drivers Age 24 and Younger Action Team meeting**, Michigan State Police Headquarters, 333 South Grand Avenue, Lansing 1917 Room, 1:30 p.m.

MARCH

- 11 **Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Action Team meeting**, Michigan State Police Headquarters, 333 South Grand Avenue, Lansing, 1970s Room, 9 a.m.

12-4/7

Drive Sober or Get

Pulled Over drunk driving crackdown

Michigan.gov/ohsp

12

- Michigan Truck Safety Commission meeting**, 1131 Centennial Way, Lansing, 9 a.m.

13

- Senior Mobility and Safety Action Team meeting**, Horatio S. Earle Learning Center, 7575 Crowner Drive, Dimondale, Lake Superior Room, 1:30 p.m.

25-27 Michigan Traffic Safety Summit,

Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, Michigan.gov/ohsp

APRIL

National Distracted Driving Month

Focusdriven.org

Alcohol Awareness Month

Nih.gov

SAFETY Network



Weather-related or human error?

RETHINKING HOW WE CHARACTERIZE BAD WEATHER CRASHES

By Michael L. Prince, Director, Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning

Every winter, we hear it and read it time and time again in media reports, "The crash is reportedly weather-related" or "ice and snow-covered roads were cited as the cause of the crash." I find it both frustrating and inaccurate because we know these crashes are overwhelmingly driver error, mostly going too fast for road conditions.

All of us as drivers are responsible for making sure we can keep our vehicles under control at all times, under all circumstances, whether the road has been plowed or salted or not. That is the law. No excuses. Anticipate slick spots and so-called "black" ice. Turn down the radio, stay off your phone, and most of all, pay attention. If a driver does not have the skill set or experience, or does not want to accept that responsibility, that person has the

obligation to stay off the roads until he or she is capable of driving safely.

But for some reason, in poor weather the road conditions frequently receive the blame instead of characterizing the crash as being caused by driving too fast for road conditions or failing to maintain control of the vehicle.

This is an educational issue, and we all need to do a better job of reeducating ourselves and the media about it every winter. We also need to stress to those that talk to the media the importance of properly characterizing the crash. After all, this is Michigan, not San Diego, California. We get snow, ice, sleet, and rain and sometimes all four at once.

The warnings go out from law enforcement to slow down, give yourself extra

time, and leave some space between you and the vehicle in front of you. But does everyone listen? No. So why do we give them a free pass when they crash? Start putting the blame where it belongs: on the driver. That same driver that passed you and me this morning on a two-lane country road that was so slippery the top safe speed was 20 miles per hour, but they were going 50.

So the next time a reporter calls and asks you if the road conditions were a factor in the crash, respond by saying that the responsibility is always with the driver to drive according to the road conditions. Speed was a factor, failing to maintain control of the vehicle was a factor, following too close was a factor, and this is Michigan.

Drive slow on ice and snow.



Michigan's car seat, booster seat use rates decline

Fewer children are riding in car seats and booster seats in Michigan, according to an observation survey conducted by the Wayne State University Transportation Research Group. For children from birth to 3 years old, 93.6 percent were in car seats, down from 95 percent in 2011. Booster seat use is at 42.4 percent for 4- to 7-year-olds, down from 43.9 percent two years ago.

The survey found that children were least likely to be in the correct car or booster seat if:

- Riding in a pickup truck (only 28.2 percent properly restrained for children 4 to 7)
- The driver was male (40.2 percent properly restrained for children 4 to 7 compared to 43.4 percent for women)
- The driver was 60 or older (35.6 percent properly restrained for children 4 to 7 compared to 45.3 percent for drivers 16 to 29)
- The driver was not buckled up (82 percent properly restrained for children from birth to 3 and 37.1 percent properly restrained for those 4 to 7)

The study also looked at misuse rates. The most common misuse for rear-facing seats was the seat not being reclined at the proper angle. Rear-facing and forward-fac-

ing seats both had frequent issues with the harness retainer clip position and excessive slack in the harness strap. The most common booster seat misuse was the shoulder belt not being properly positioned over the shoulder and chest of the child.

Michigan law requires drivers and passengers 15 years old and younger in any seating position to be buckled up. Children must be properly buckled in a car seat or booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4 feet 9 inches tall.

SAFETY Network

The benefits of a Drug Recognition Expert prosecutor in the courtroom

By Chris Anderson, Eaton County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney

To address the serious issue of driving under the influence of a controlled substance, intoxicating substance or liquor, or a combination of these substances on Michigan roadways, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning introduced a program in 2011 to train law enforcement officers as Drug Recognition Experts (DREs).

Michigan is the only state that invites prosecutors to attend the DRE school. The experience and knowledge that these prosecutors receive during this training have been beneficial in preparing them for Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) trials.

This benefit is best illustrated by the following words from Eaton County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Chris Anderson who attended the DRE school.

"I have worked as an assistant prosecuting attorney (APA) since August 2010. As a young APA I was assigned, like many other young APAs, to a district court caseload that contained a fair share of drunk driving cases. It was never really an issue for me to understand how alcohol affected one's ability to drive in a safe manner. The challenge for me was always the case in which someone was driving after taking a double dose of their Vicodin or another prescribed substance.

"What evidence was I going to have that such a driver's ability to operate was impaired; the results of the Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST)? Oftentimes I would see cases in which the suspect performed well enough during SFST that when I was reviewing the case I may have declined to issue charges based on what I perceived to be a lack of evidence of intoxication or impairment.

"In 2012, Kenneth Stecker invited me to attend the classroom portion of the DRE program. The two weeks I spent participating in the program were two weeks very well spent. The program was demanding and intense. It started with the premise

that there are seven classes of intoxicating substances that people use and abuse before driving.

"While it is true that the program is primarily geared towards law enforcement officers who are engaged in impaired driving enforcement, there is much to be gained by an APA attending the program.

"Becoming a DRE-trained prosecutor has provided me with the tools to evaluate cases in a more complete manner. It has enabled me to see the impairment in a case that many may not see. While SFST is a great tool for law enforcement, those tests were designed to detect alcohol-impaired drivers. Becoming a DRE-trained prosecutor has made me more effective in evaluating drug-impaired driving cases.

"It has helped me understand the significance of observations made by law enforcement officers who are encountering these people. The knowledge I have acquired has enabled me to pull critical information out of non-DRE trained officers who failed to see the relevance of that information. Changes in attitude, levels of consciousness, or ability to carry on a conversation in an intelligent manner, all provide cause to suspect drug intoxication that had been missed initially.

"The program also made me a better courtroom advocate for my impaired driving cases. The old saying 'knowledge is power' is ever so true in regards to drug-impaired driving prosecutions. The knowledge I acquired through the DRE program has made me more adept at cross-examining experts, directing police officers and lab personnel, and at tying evidence together for a jury.

"It also made me a better prosecutor in other aspects. It raised my level of understanding of how certain substances affect the human body and why people like to abuse them. It is not just about controlled substances. Growing up I knew kids that

'robo-tripped' or 'Triple-C'd,' by drinking large amounts of cough syrup. Who knew that dextromethorphan (DXM) was the substance that they were really seeking, whether they knew it or not? I naively assumed that the robo-tripping was just a delivery vessel for the alcohol I believed cough medicine contained. Not so much, as I learned. DXM is found in countless cold and cough medications sold freely over the counter. At high doses DXM creates a high that is similar to PCP. This knowledge changed how I evaluated other cases such as retail frauds. It also changed how I read the sections of police reports that detailed the personal property obtained from a suspect that had been arrested. It has changed how I formulated plea offers and sentence recommendations.

"All in all, the two weeks that I spent completing the classroom portion of the DRE program was an amazing experience. The knowledge that I gained has been put to use on a nearly daily basis. I would strongly encourage anyone with an interest in impaired driving prosecution to consider making the commitment and completing the program.

For more information on this article and PAAM training programs, contact Kenneth Stecker, Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor, at (517) 334-6060 or e-mail at steckerk@michigan.gov. Please consult your prosecutor before adopting practices suggested by reports in this article. Discuss your practices that relate to this article with your commanding officers, police legal advisors, and the prosecuting attorney before changing your practice.





April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

MATERIALS AVAILABLE TO HELP PROMOTE ISSUE

More than 3,300 people died in distracted driving crashes across the country in 2012. The age group with the greatest proportion of distracted drivers was those under 20, with 16 percent of drivers younger than 20 involved in fatal crashes reported to have been distracted while driving. Of those drivers involved in fatal crashes who were reportedly distracted, the 30- to 39-year-olds had the highest proportion of cell phone involvement.

Research shows that high visibility enforcement works because, with many distracted drivers, the fear of a citation and significant fine outweighs their fear of being injured or killed in a crash. To help promote distracted driving enforcement efforts during the month of April, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is placing a national advertising buy April 7-16. This marks the first time NHTSA has purchased advertising to promote distracted driving enforcement.

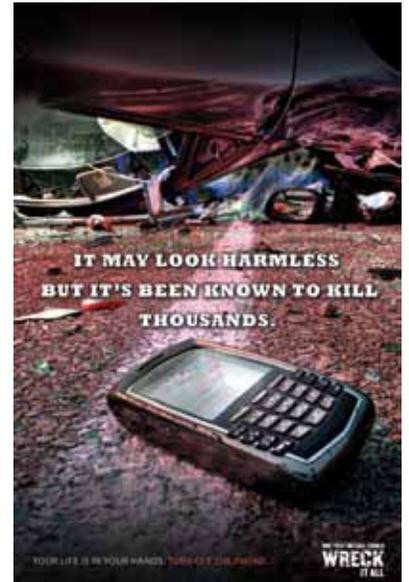
In addition, banner ads, radio and television public service announcements, logos, posters, and graphics for social media sites are available at TrafficSafetyMarketing.gov/DistractedDrivingPrevention.

STATE AND NATIONAL DISTRACTED DRIVING DATA AVAILABLE ON THE WEB

Two Web sites that can provide data and other information about distracted driving and other traffic safety issues are Distraction.gov and MichiganTrafficCrashFacts.org.

Distraction.gov contains national data, research, facts, statistics, stories of lives affected by distracted driving, as well as opportunities to get involved with the fight to end distracted driving.

MichiganTrafficCrashFacts.org provides comprehensive, state-level traffic crash data and reports. Fact sheets about traffic safety issues, including cell phone issue, and a data query tool that allows users to specify data by city, county, date, or type of crash are also available.



GET INVOLVED THROUGH GTSAC ACTION TEAM

The Governor’s Traffic Safety Advisory Commission (GTSAC) Distracted Driving Action Team meets April 15 at 1 p.m. at the Michigan State Police Headquarters, 333 South Grand Avenue, Lansing.

GTSAC Action Teams provide targeted guidance for each emphasis area in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. There are 11

teams and members represent a variety of traffic safety areas including law enforcement, engineering, education, medicine, and research, as well as public and private organizations.

Visit Michigan.gov/gtsac for more information.

FREE DISTRACTED DRIVING MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM OHSP

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning has three publications that can be used to help promote safe driving during National Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April, including:

- **Thumbs on the Wheel flyer**—Learn about the three main types of distraction and the penalties for disobeying this regulation. Limit 250
- **Thumbs on the Wheel poster**—This poster helps promote Michigan’s ban on texting while driving and includes information about the penalties. Limit 25

- **Distractions, Underage Drinking: Life Can Change in a Second DVD**—Includes PowerPoint presentations and videos on underage drinking and distracted driving, speaker notes, and a video depicting a dramatization of a distracted driving crash. Limit 1

To order the above items, e-mail trafficsafety@michigan.gov or call (517) 636-4256. A catalog of all available materials can be found at Michigan.gov/ohsp under the Traffic Safety Materials Link.

SAFETY Network

OHSP Staff:

Contact	Program Area	Phone	E-mail
Michael L. Prince	Director	(517) 241-1512	princem@michigan.gov
Janet Hengesbach	Executive Secretary	(517) 241-1512	hengsbachj2@michigan.gov
SAFETY PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION			
Kathy Farnum	Senior Section Chief	(517) 241-2528	farnumk@michigan.gov
Susan Bishop	Grants Technician	(517) 241-2520	bishops2@michigan.gov
Linda Fech	Seniors/Teens	(517) 241-2533	fechl@michigan.gov
Charlotte Kilvington	Analysis & Evaluation	(517) 241-2582	kilvingtonc@michigan.gov
Alicia Sledge	Traffic Records	(517) 241-1505	sledgea@michigan.gov
COMMUNICATIONS			
Anne Readett	Section Chief	(517) 241-2569	readetta@michigan.gov
Jonathan Benallack	Graphic Designer	(517) 241-2571	benallackj1@michigan.gov
Melody Kindraka	Public Information	(517) 241-1522	kindrakam@michigan.gov
Lynn Sutfin	Public Information	(517) 241-1513	sutfinl@michigan.gov
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT			
Spencer Simmons	Section Chief	(517) 241-2556	simmonss6@michigan.gov
Julie Roth	Secondary Road Patrol	(517) 241-2572	rothj3@michigan.gov
Heidi Ruis	Accountant	(517) 241-2584	ruish@michigan.gov
Jean Shattuck	Accounting Technician	(517) 241-2544	shattuckj@michigan.gov
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT			
Jason Hamblen	Section Chief	(517) 241-2578	hamblenj@michigan.gov
Jamie Dolan	Northern Michigan	(906) 225-7036	dolanj@michigan.gov
Pat Eliason	Police Traffic Services	(517) 241-2498	eliasonp@michigan.gov
Michael Harris	State DRE Coordinator	(517) 241-2536	harrism13@michigan.gov
Alyson Kechkaylo	Occupant Protection	(517) 241-2546	kechkayloa@michigan.gov
Dianne Perukel	Alcohol	(517) 241-2565	perukeld@michigan.gov
Chad Teachout	Motorcycle	(517) 241-2579	teachoutc@michigan.gov

Safety Network is published by the
Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning
Editor: Lynn Sutfin
Designer: Jon Benallack
Office of Highway Safety Planning
P.O. Box 30634
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 241-2500