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NATIONAL TRAFFIC SAFETY FACTS 2001

Rural areas

22,735 fatal crashes involving
34,165 vehicles and
59,359 individuals,
resulting in 25,737 fatalities

Urban areas

15,060 fatal crashes involving
22,290 vehicles and
41,609 individuals
resulting in 16,379 fatalities

❖ Rural fatal crashes accounted for
61 percent of all traffic fatalities
39 percent of the vehicle miles traveled and
21 percent of the population

❖ The difference between rural and urban fatalities has
increased from

6,954 in 1990
to
8,853 in 2001

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ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION

DATE: 2-27-03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT G

SUBMITTED BY: Mary Ellen Holly

- ❖ From 1990 to 2001 there were approximately 25,000 rural fatalities per year. However, the number of urban fatalities has decreased from 18,807 in 1990 to 15,494 in 2001.
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CRASHES

- ❖ Approximately 70% of all fatal crashes on roadways with speed limits of 40mph or less are in urban areas
- ❖ Fatal crashes occurring on roadways with speed limits between 45mph and 50mph are evenly split.
- ❖ Over 70% of the fatal crashes on roadways of 55mph or higher occur in rural areas.

22,735 fatal crashes (60%) in rural areas and
15,060 fatal crashes (40%) in urban areas

In rural areas, 54% occur in daylight while
46% are at night.

In urban areas, 46% occur in daylight while
54% occur at night

VEHICLES

- ❖ Passenger cars had the highest involvement rate for both rural and urban fatal crashes (44% and 52% respectively).
- ❖ Light trucks (pickups, vans, and utility vehicles) accounted for 39% of vehicles involved in rural fatal crashes and 32% in urban fatal crashes.

34,165 vehicles involved in fatal rural crashes
23,648 in fatal urban crashes

The damage to vehicles involved in rural fatal crashes is more severe than the damage to vehicles involved in urban fatal crashes as measured by the percent of disabling deformation

Almost 80% of vehicles involved in rural fatal crashes are disabled, whereas
65% of vehicles involved in urban fatal crashes are disabled

DRIVERS

- ❖ There is very little difference between the blood alcohol concentration of rural and urban drivers involved in fatal crashes.

TRAFFIC SAFETY FACTS
2001
CHILDREN

- ❖ Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 4 to 14 years old.

In the United States, an average of six children
0-14 years old were killed
and 732 were injured every day
in motor vehicle crashes

In the 0-14 year age group,
males
accounted for 57% of the fatalities
and 51% of those injured
in motor vehicle crashes.

Research has shown that lap/shoulder safety belts,
when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat
occupants (age 5 years and older) of passenger cars by
45% and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50%.

For light truck occupants, safety belts reduce the risk of
fatal injury by 60% and the risk of moderate-to-critical
injury by 65%.

- ❖ From 1975 through 2001, an estimated 5,085 lives were
saved by the use of child restraints (child safety seats or

adult belts). In 2001, an estimated 269 children under age 5 were saved as a result of child restraint use.

- ❖ If 100% of motor vehicle occupants under 5 years old were protected by child safety seats, an estimated 407 lives (that is, an additional 138) could have been saved in 2001.

TRAFFIC SAFETY FACTS

NEVADA

In 2002,
there were a total of
259 fatalities,
up 23 from 2001

In 2002,
Occupant fatalities in
five rural counties increased
from 24
to 63
up 39 from 2001

From 1995 to 2001,
10 children
who were riding in the back of a pick-up truck
died
as a result of vehicle crashes
(In 2002, three more were added in Silver Springs)

STATE LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEETS

January 2001

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Strengthening Child Passenger Safety Laws-Increase Car Seat and Belt Use, Decrease Crash Fatalities and Injuries

Traffic crashes are a leading cause of death in the United States. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories have child passenger safety laws ("car seat laws"). However, many of these laws have significant gaps and exemptions in coverage that diminish the protection that all children need in motor vehicles.

Essential Components of a Strong Law

Child passenger safety laws should cover every child (up to age 16), in every seating position, in every passenger vehicle. The following is a list of components that make up a strong child restraint law:

- Cover all occupants up to age 16 in all seating positions. All child restraint laws should cover children up to age sixteen; the adult belt law should apply to all other occupants. Although most child restraint laws cover babies and young children up to four years of age or 40 pounds most laws do not protect children up to 16 years of age. For example, in many states, a 10-year-old can legally ride in the back seat without being secured because the laws in those states apply only to front seat occupants. Also, the belt use laws in most states permit only secondary enforcement.



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration



People Saving People
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>

- Require child occupants to be properly restrained. The law should explicitly require a child to be in an age and size appropriate restraint system. Currently, many states allow a child to be restrained in a safety belt when, in fact, some form of a child safety seat or booster seat is the correct safety device for the child's size and weight.
- Include all vehicles equipped with safety belts. A strong child restraint law should apply to all vehicles that are equipped with safety belts. Child passenger safety laws that contain exemptions for trucks, vans, taxis, and commercial vehicles needlessly put children at risk.
- Make the driver responsible for restraint use by all children under 16 years of age. Many laws assign responsibility to the parent or guardian, who may not be the driver or even be in the vehicle. Also, child restraint laws in many states do not assign responsibility to any specific adult, making these laws difficult to enforce.
- Allow passengers to ride only in seating areas equipped with safety belts. A strong child passenger safety law should not include exemptions that allow children to be transported in areas not equipped with safety belts, e.g., the cargo area of a truck. This practice is extremely dangerous and places children at unnecessary risk.
- Prohibit all passengers from riding in the cargo areas of pickup trucks. A strong child passenger safety law should prohibit all passengers from riding in the cargo areas of pickup trucks. When all passengers are prohibited, you increase the chances that children will not be allowed to ride there. With or without a canopy, riding in the cargo area places all people at unnecessary risk for death and injury. A Washington state study found the risk of dying to be 10.4 times higher for persons riding in cargo areas, when comparing persons who were in crashes while riding in cargo areas to the general population of people involved in crashes.

Upgrade Child Safety Laws-Eliminate Exemptions

Many state laws have exemptions that allow children to ride unrestrained in certain vehicles and under unique circumstances. Listed below are exemptions and conditions that are included in many laws; leaving children unprotected:

- Exemption for overcrowded vehicles. In nearly half of the states, children can ride unsecured if all safety belts are in use.
- Exemption for "attending to the personal needs of the child." This encourages adults to carry children in their laps during feeding or other activities-behaviors which are highly risky.
- Loose guidelines for issuing medical waivers that allow children with special medical needs to ride unrestrained. Advances in child restraint systems have made it possible to accommodate children with almost any type of physical disability.
- Exemption for out-of-state vehicles, drivers, and children. Currently, children in many states are not required to be secured if the vehicle or driver is from another state. Children need to be protected, even when they're in a vehicle which is just "passing through" or with a family with an out-of-state license.
- Exemption for drivers who are not the vehicle owner or who are not related to the children being carried. There are state laws that do not hold the driver accountable for unrestrained children.

Conduct Combined Public Awareness and Enforcement Campaigns

- Publicity and enforcement must go hand-in-hand. Publicity campaigns should educate the public about the importance of proper child passenger protection. Enforcement campaigns should include information on correct use, as well as publicity to raise public awareness of the law and its enforcement.

- Raise awareness of vehicle/child safety seat compatibility. Many parents and others who transport children do not understand the potential deadly results from a child seat or booster seat that is not properly used and secured in a vehicle.

<p><i>Everyone Using a Child Safety Seat Should Remember Three Things:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the instructions for the child safety seat or booster seat. • Read the vehicle owner's manual. • Test for a snug, secure fit. <p><i>Everyone Transporting Children Should Remember:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rear seat is the safest place for children of all ages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants (less than one year of age) should never be carried in the front seat of a car or truck with a passenger-side air bag. • Infants must always ride in the rear seat, facing the rear of the motor vehicle. • Make sure everyone is buckled up correctly. Infants and very young children should be in child safety seats. Young children should be correctly buckled using a booster seat. • Unbelted or improperly belted occupants can be hurt or killed by the deploying air bag.
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Presidential Initiative for Increasing Seat Belt Use Nationwide

On April 16, 1997, the Secretary of Transportation issued the Presidential Initiative for Increasing Seat Belt Use Nationwide. Included in the initiative are ambitious child occupant goals. These goals aim to reduce child occupant fatalities (0-4 years) by 15 percent in 2000 and by 25 percent in 2005 (from a total of 656 in 1996). We met the 2000 goal, a year

early, reducing child fatalities by 16 percent from 1996. The Presidential Initiative identifies closing the gaps in child passenger safety laws as an important strategy in meeting these new national goals.

Highway Safety Grant Programs for Occupant Protection Activities

On May 22, 1998, Congress passed H.R. 2400, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). A number of programs established in TEA-21 have a direct impact on seat belt use and occupant protection. Beginning in FY 1999, the Section 157 Seat Belt Incentive Grant program authorized \$500 million over five years to encourage states to increase seat belt use rates. States received funds under this program based on projected annual savings in Federal medical costs resulting from increased seat belt use. States may use these grant funds for any eligible Title 23 project (which may include construction projects). The Act also provides that Section 157 funds not allocated to incentive grants in a fiscal year beginning in FY 2000 be allocated to the States, through a competitive grant process, to carry out innovative projects to promote increased seat belt use rates, and child passenger safety activities. In addition, the Section 405 (a) occupant protection incentive grant program authorized \$83 million over five years to target specific occupant protection laws and programs. Beginning in FY '99, states received grants under this program if they demonstrated that they had in place certain occupant protection laws and programs, such as primary safety belt use laws and special traffic enforcement programs. Finally, Section 2003 (b) of TEA-21 established a two-year program for FY 2000 and 2001, in which states will receive grants if they carry out child passenger protection education and training activities.

The reports and additional information are available from your State Highway Safety Office, the NHTSA Regional Office serving your State, or from NHTSA Headquarters, Traffic Safety Programs, ATTN: NTS-12, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590; 202-366-2708.