

# Building Safe Communities

A Publication of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration



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## National Child Passenger Safety Week

February 11–17, 2001, is National Child Passenger Safety Week. A primary message of this year’s campaign is “4 Steps for Kids.” This message reminds parents (and other caregivers, including grandparents) that there are four crucial steps in protecting children riding in automobiles—steps that change as the child grows and ages:



1. Rear-facing child seats from birth to at least 20 pounds and at least one year old
2. Convertible, forward-facing seats for children at least one year old and over 20 to about 40 pounds
3. Belt-positioning booster seats for children from about 40 pounds to at least 80 pounds and four feet nine inches tall
4. Seat belts for older children who are large enough for the belt to fit them correctly, at least four feet nine inches tall and about 80 pounds

Child Passenger Safety Week presents an opportunity for Safe Communities programs to work with local affiliates of national organizations, the media, and other partners to promote the basic rules of protecting young automobile occupants. Two new products are available from NHTSA to assist programs with their efforts. The “4 Steps for Kids” Child Passenger Safety Week 2001 Planner will include drop-in articles, posters, tips and talking points, and other information to help make your coalition’s Child Passenger Safety Week a success. To obtain a planner, fax an order to (202) 493-2062. ■

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### Child Passenger Safety Seat Inspection Locator: **New** from NHTSA

The NHTSA website now includes a Child Passenger Safety Seat Inspection Locator, which helps parents and caregivers locate places in their communities where they can have child passenger seats inspected by certified technicians to ensure that the seats are safe, properly installed, and appropriate for the child’s size. The site can be searched by state or zip code, and links to all the NHTSA Regional Office websites are included. To use the locator, go to the NHTSA website at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/) and click on the Child Safety Seat Inspection icon.

## Continuity and Change

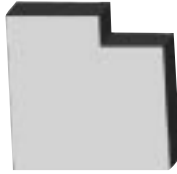
The new volume year marks some changes for *Building Safe Communities* (BSC). Beginning with this issue, BSC will be published quarterly, in the winter, spring, summer, and fall. We will continue to provide BSC to subscribers free of charge, and BSC will still be available on the World Wide Web in both HTML and PDF formats. Those of you wanting copies of back issues can find them in the BSC archive on the website <[www.edc.org/HHD/csn/bsc](http://www.edc.org/HHD/csn/bsc)>, and hard copies of some back issues are still available as well. Contact information for requesting back issues or additions or corrections to the mailing list can be found below.

This winter we are beginning to revise and update *Who's Who in Traffic Safety*, our on-line guide to the major agencies and organizations involved in traffic safety, which includes links to their websites. During this revision, the current edition of *Who's Who* will still be available on-line at <[www.edc.org/HHD/csn/buildbridges/whoswho/](http://www.edc.org/HHD/csn/buildbridges/whoswho/)>.

The Safe Communities Service Center (SCSC) will continue to provide technical assistance and publications by telephone, by e-mail, and on the Web. More information on the SCSC can be found on page 6. The SCSC website, like the Who's Who and NHTSA websites, can be found on the navigation bar of the BSC website.

Finally, we always welcome information about the activities of Safe Communities coalitions for possible use as case studies. There is no need to write an article; just send a short description of your program's activities (and successes), annual reports, press clippings, or whatever else would assist us in learning about your program to BSC by e-mail, mail, or fax, using the contact information on this page. We want to know what Safe Communities programs are doing so that we can share effective and innovative practices with other programs, and learn how this newsletter and its affiliated websites can provide information and resources that our readers will find useful. ■

## Safe Communities at the County Level



The Salt Lake County Multi-Agency Task Force in Utah has discovered that working at the county level provides opportunities to take programs that have been developed or successfully piloted by constituent agencies and expand them to neighboring communities or the entire county. Salt Lake County has been especially successful in encouraging schools to become involved in traffic safety. The following three programs, in particular, have been proven so effective that they are rapidly spreading to other counties:

❖ **Operation Safe Passages:** Originally developed to protect children from being abducted while walking to and from school, this program—in which parents and other volunteers safeguard walking routes—proved so successful in lowering the rate of pedestrian injuries among children that communities now implement it to help prevent motor vehicle injuries.

❖ **Parent Parking Patrol Program:** This program uses parent volunteers to approach drivers who are violating traffic laws or otherwise endangering children in school zones to talk to them about their driving. The volunteers are trained to recognize moving violations and unsafe driving and to educate drivers in a nonconfrontational manner.

❖ **It's Up You to Cross Alive:** This program teaches children ages 10 through 16 about crossing streets safely. ■

*For more information about the Salt Lake County Multi-Agency Task Force, contact Jeanne Berman of the Utah Department of Public Safety's Highway Safety Office by telephone at (801) 293-2485 or by e-mail at <[jberman@dps.state.ut.us](mailto:jberman@dps.state.ut.us)>.*

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# Driver Distraction: An Emerging Issue

*Driver distraction is perhaps the most demanding highway traffic safety issue of the day. For those of us at the Department of Transportation working in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, driver distraction is a broad subject area that includes everything from radios and fast food to Internet connections and on-board navigation devices.*



These words by then Acting NHTSA Administrator Rosalyn Millman opened a NHTSA Public Meeting on Driver Distraction in July. The increase in the use of hand-held cellular telephones by drivers has drawn attention to the issue of driver distraction. But telephones are only one of many devices that can distract drivers. A recent NHTSA study revealed that tuning a radio or using a manually operated on-board navigation system also have the potential to erode a driver's ability to stay in the correct lane or avoid a collision.

A range of prevention activities can address these issues:

❖ **Legal interventions:** A small number of communities have imposed restrictions on driving while using a cellular phone. In October 2000, Suffolk County in New York State became the first county to make it illegal to use a hand-held telephone while driving.

❖ **Behavioral interventions:** Research has indicated that “chunking”—that is, doing part of a task, such as searching for a radio station or dialing a telephone, while returning one's attention to the road at frequent intervals—is safer than turning one's attention away from the road until the task is completed. Some believe that teaching drivers to use this technique may help them avoid collisions while performing any activity that takes their attention away from the road, even for a short time.

❖ **Engineering interventions:** Engineers are working on voice-controlled radios, navigation systems that do not allow driver input while the automobile is in motion, and telephones that do not ring while a car is changing lanes or turning.

Keeping ahead of the curve on new forms of driver distraction can help Safe Communities programs prevent this problem from becoming as serious as impaired driving or speeding. ■

## Resources on Driver Distraction

The **Internet Forum on the Safety Implications of Driver Distraction When Using In-Vehicle Technologies** archives papers, presentations, and other resources created for this NHTSA-sponsored event, available at [www.nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/driver-distraction/Welcome.htm](http://www.nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/driver-distraction/Welcome.htm).

**An Investigation of the Safety Implications of Wireless Communications in Vehicles** is available at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research/wireless](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research/wireless).

The **Distracted Driver Toolkit** was created by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) to help traffic safety programs educate drivers about this danger. For information, visit the NETS website at [www.trafficsafety.org](http://www.trafficsafety.org), or call (888) 221-0045.

The **Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association** offers tip sheets and other information about the safe use of cellular telephones while in cars; these resources are available at [www.wow-com.com/consumer/driving/guide.cfm](http://www.wow-com.com/consumer/driving/guide.cfm).

## National News .....

❖ **Lifesavers 2000**, which will be held March 25–27, 2001, in Denver, Colorado, will feature approximately 10 sessions focusing on Safe Communities. Tentative topics include the latest trends in community assessment, strategic planning, coalition-building, and garnering resources; diversity; social marketing strategies; data and evaluation methods; partnerships; and self-sufficiency. For information, contact Lifesavers, P.O. Box 30045, Alexandria, VA 22310-0045. Fax: (703) 922-7780; WWW: <[www.lifesaversconference.org/](http://www.lifesaversconference.org/)>. Safe Communities programs interested in opportunities to network with their peers at Lifesavers should contact Jack Oates at NHTSA by telephone at (202) 366-2730 or e-mail at <[jack.oates@nhtsa.dot.gov](mailto:jack.oates@nhtsa.dot.gov)>.

❖ **.08 Blood Alcohol Content (BAC)** gained additional standing as the uniform definition of drunk driving on October 23, 2000, with the signing of the Federal Transportation Appropriation Bill. Starting on October 1, 2003, states without a .08 BAC per se law will lose a percentage of their Federal highway construction funds. The percentage of funds lost will increase each fiscal year (although states can reclaim some of the funding if they come into compliance). Such per se laws make it illegal for a person with a BAC of .08 or above to operate a motor vehicle. Eighteen states and the District of Columbia currently comply with the .08 standard. A nationwide .08 BAC standard would save 500 lives a year.



❖ **Scott Berns, MD**, founder of the Providence Safe Communities Partnership, was selected as 1 of 15 White House Fellows for 2000–2001. Dr. Berns will serve as a special assistant in the Office of the Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation (DOT), where he will work with DOT and NHTSA staff on pediatric injury prevention. Dr. Berns hopes to bring his experience in Providence to this position and further the cause of community-based traffic safety programs.

❖ **Drive Safely Work Week (DSWW)**, held September 11–15, 2000, reached close to 2.5 million employees (from 2,500 participating organizations), making it the most successful DSWW campaign yet. DSWW represents an important opportunity for Safe Communities coalitions to work with local businesses to ensure that employees are driving safely on the job, as well as during their commute to and from the workplace. The next DSWW will be September 10–14, 2001. For information on DSWW, contact the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, 1900 L Street, SW, Suite 705, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone: (888) 221-0045; e-mail: <[nets@trafficsafety.org](mailto:nets@trafficsafety.org)>; WWW: <[www.trafficsafety.org](http://www.trafficsafety.org)>. ■



## Resources from NHTSA

❖ **Safe Communities: The First Six Months** is a manual describing the Safe Communities model, offering advice on convening the first meeting of a new Safe Communities coalition, and outlining the steps necessary to begin building a successful Safe Communities program. This publication can be found on the NHTSA website at <[www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities/streets/index.html](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities/streets/index.html)>.

❖ **Creating Partnerships to Save Lives** are the proceedings of the National Diversity Forum, held in February 1999. At this forum, delegates from more than 100 national organizations that represent people of color came together to advance traffic safety and public health priorities among communities of color, and to develop a shared public health/traffic safety agenda for the future. *Creating Partnerships to Save Lives* includes summaries of speakers' and community delegations' recommendations.

Both publications are available from the NHTSA Media and Marketing Division, TSP Resource Center, NTS-21, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (888) 327-4236; fax: (202) 493-2062.

❖ **Connecting Traffic Safety and Community Health: Three Success Stories from New England** is a 12-page brochure describing how traffic safety advocates and people interested in a broader community health agenda worked together to prevent traffic injuries, enhance the public's health, and improve the quality of life in their communities. For more information, contact Mario Damiata, NHTSA Region I, Volpe Transportation Systems Center, Kendall Square, Code 903, Cambridge, MA 02142. Telephone: (617) 494-3227; e-mail: <[mario.damiata@nhtsa.dot.gov](mailto:mario.damiata@nhtsa.dot.gov)>. ■

## Local Notes



❖ **Oregon:** The Salem Safe Community project is an example of how a Safe Communities coalition can become involved in emerging issues as well as more traditional traffic safety concerns. Realizing that a strong community base is essential for program success, this project has made traffic safety data available to each of Salem's 19 Neighborhood Associations for purposes of community planning. It has also worked to increase the number of bilingual certified child safety seat technicians and to extend its outreach efforts to housing developments for low-income families in order to reach this important underserved population. Observational studies have shown that the use of car seats by children under age 4 in Salem has risen 7 percent in the past year. The Safe Community project is also working with Salem's Livable Communities initiative to coordinate traffic safety efforts with projects seeking to improve the quality of life in Salem by enhancing the community's public transportation system. Finally, Claudia Hedenskog, the project coordinator, is serving on a City Council Committee considering banning the use of cellular telephones while driving. For more information, contact Claudia Hedenskog at the Salem Police Department, (503) 588-6112.

❖ **Connecticut:** The Seymour Ambulance Association, home of the Safe Communities Program of the Lower Naugatuck Valley, was chosen as the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians 2000 Leo R. Schwartz Emergency Medical Service of the Year. The Safe Communities Program of the Lower Naugatuck Valley is also featured in the new Region I NHTSA publication *Connecting Traffic Safety and Community Health*. (Information about this publication can be found under Resources from NHTSA on page 4.) For more information on the Safe Communities Program of the Lower Naugatuck Valley, contact Frank Marcucio at (203) 881-5018 or by e-mail at <svacems@aol.com>.

❖ **Illinois:** In September, Springfield Safe Communities hosted its first Buckle Up Springfield event to encourage the use of seat belts by area motorists. A total of 500 safety packets were distributed. The centerpiece of this event was Mayor Karen Hasara's dedication of the Buckle Up Car, a safety display created in collaboration with a number of community partners, including City Water, Light, and Power (the local public utility), who built a trailer for the display, and several area sign companies, who donated signs and banners. The car itself, donated to Springfield Safe Communities by a local body shop, had been involved in a head-on collision with a truck in December 1999; both front-seat occupants survived the crash, thanks to their seat belts. A seat belt survey held in conjunction with the event revealed that 68 percent of passing motorists were buckled up, an increase of 13 percent from a similar survey done in February 2000. Buckle Up Springfield events will be held twice a year to help Springfield Safe Communities meet its goal of 80-percent seat belt use by spring 2001. For more information on Springfield Safe Communities, contact Sharon Johnson by telephone at (217) 789-2307 or by e-mail at <sjohnson@culp.com>. ■



Springfield Safe Communities Buckle Up Car

# Building Safe Communities

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## Safe Communities Calendar

December 2000: *National Drunk and Drugged Driving (5D) Prevention Month*

December 15, 2000: *Lights on for Life Day*

December 15–17, 2000: *You Drink & Drive. You Lose. Mobilization and National Holiday Lifesavers Weekend*

February 11–17, 2001: *National Child Passenger Safety Week*

March 2001: *Zero Tolerance Means Zero Chances Campaign*

March 25–27, 2001: *National Lifesavers Conference, Denver, Colorado*

April 2001: *Alcohol Awareness Month*

May 2001: *National Bike Month and National Motorcycle Safety Month*

May 13–19, 2001: *National Transportation Week and National EMS Week*

May 16, 2001: *Operation Lifesaver Awareness Day*

May 21–23, 2001: *Tenth Conference on International Safe Communities, Anchorage, Alaska*

May 21–28, 2001: *Buckle Up America Week*

June 2001: *Fifth Annual Native American Lifesavers Conference, Bismarck, North Dakota*

September 10–14, 2001: *Drive Safely Work Week*

May 2002: *Sixth World Conference on Injury Prevention and Control, Montreal*



## What's New

at the  
Safe Communities  
Service Center

Visit the SCSC website!  
Here's what's new:

- \* *Connecting Traffic Safety and Community Health*, a new publication describing how traffic safety advocates and people interested in a broader community health agenda can work together, can be found in the Workbench section of the Product Shop
- \* *Safe Communities: Taking It to the Streets* is a new marketing brochure that can be previewed at and ordered from the website
- \* Updates of local and national news of special interest to Safe Communities coalitions

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