



Department of Transportation

“Click It or Ticket” Teen Safety Belt Program
Texas Department of Transportation
Campaign Messages and Media Q&A
February 1, 2012

Campaign Messages

Note: Campaign messages are written to motivate and influence our audience (teen drivers 16 – 20 years old) to buckle up in their cars in both the front and back seats. The following key messages will serve as the foundation for all PR materials geared toward our audience, including talking points for deskside briefings, grantee and partner outreach, and the campaign news release. Key messages will not be provided to media in this format. See media Q&A below.

Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of teen deaths nationwide.

- Teenagers are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers (NHTSA).
- Nationally in 2009, 3,349 teens, ages 16–20, were killed in motor vehicle crashes, and 56 percent were unrestrained at the time of the fatal crash (NHTSA).

Not wearing a safety belt is still one of the biggest reasons for fatalities of all occupants.

- In 2009, the use of seat belts in passenger vehicles saved an estimated 12,713 lives (NHTSA).
- In Texas in 2010, the use of seat belts saved an estimated 1,425 lives (NHTSA).

Lack of safety belt usage among teens is a big problem in Texas.

- In Texas, in 2010, nearly half (48 percent) of the 291 teen drivers and occupants of passenger vehicles, ages 16–20, killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes were not wearing their safety belts at the time of the crash, where restraint use was applicable and known (TxDOT).
- Sixty-nine percent of the 291 teen drivers and occupants of passenger vehicles, ages 16–20, killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes were male (TxDOT).

Texas law states that: you must buckle up in the front AND back seat and use your safety belt 100 percent of the time.

- As of September 1, 2009, all occupants of a vehicle, no matter their age, must be secured by a safety belt, including back seat passengers.
- National data found that seat belt use in rear seats stood at 70 percent and continued to be lower than in front seats (2009 NHTSA National Occupant Protection Use Survey).
- Buckling up doesn't only affect the safety belt wearer. Those back seat passengers not buckled up can become a human missile during a car accident, injuring not only themselves, but those in the front seat as well.

You and the ones you love will face serious consequences for not buckling up whether you're in the front or back seat.

- If you're not wearing a safety belt, you will get a ticket. All unbuckled passengers will be cited individually.
- Drivers not wearing safety belts will face fines of up to \$250.
- Teenagers on the Graduated Driver License (GDL) Program could risk license suspension if they receive a seat belt citation.

Reaching out to teens where they live, study and play, with tailored messages has had significant impact seat belt use compliance.

- TxDOT launched its “Teen Click It or Ticket” pilot program in May 2009 to increase safety belt usage in the five counties where teens buckled up the least, and were therefore the most at-risk.
- The program featured teen focused messages, school and community organizations partnerships, local and statewide events and online/social media components.
- Observational survey results conducted prior and after the campaign show a usage increase of **6.2 percentage points** for drivers and front seat passengers in the five-county focus area.

Media Q&A

The following Q&A responses can be used by “Click It or Ticket” Teen campaign spokespeople. These questions are intended to address questions about the campaign itself, providing campaign goal sound bites. Spokespeople will also draw from the messaging above.

Q: What is the “Click It or Ticket” Teen Program?

A: TxDOT launched the pilot “Click It or Ticket” Teen program in the spring of 2009 with the goal of increasing safety belt usage among teenage drivers, ages 16–20, in the Texas counties of Dallas, Tarrant, Harris, Bexar and Hidalgo. The TxDOT “Click It or Ticket” Teen program also focused on notifying teens of the law which took effect on September 1, 2009, requiring all passengers to buckle up, including those in the back seat of vehicles. The pilot program included activities, such as events at area high schools, events at the State Fair and at Six Flags Over Texas, as well as online and social media activities to engage teens in a space in which they spend a great deal of time. The pilot campaign reached more than 375,000 high school students for thirty days during each of the campaign’s four waves of activity. Building on the success of the pilot program, TxDOT rolled out the Teen “Click It or Ticket” campaign statewide last February. This year’s efforts are a continuation of the program’s success to continue increasing safety belt usage among teens.

Q: What is the safety belt law?

A: **All** occupants of a vehicle, no matter their age, must be secured by a safety belt, no matter where they are seated in the vehicle. Unbuckled passengers could face fines from \$25 up to \$200. Unbuckled drivers may face fines of up to \$250. Note: The safety belt law was extended to backseat passengers in September 2009.

Q: How effective has the “Click It or Ticket” Teen program been so far?

A: The 2009 National Highway Traffic Safety Association research report shows that safety belt usage increased in the program areas (Bexar, Dallas, Tarrant, Harris and Hidalgo and counties) by 6.2 percentage points for teen drivers and front seat passengers from program initiation. This is a significant increase in usage, especially when compared to other counties, which saw a 3.2 percent increase in usage during the same time period.

Q. How will the campaign get the message across to teenagers?

A. High schools across the state (approximately 700 schools this year) who have signed up to participate in the program will receive implementation kits that contain on-campus materials to display during February. The materials are provided to each school at no cost and include parking lot banners, lawn signs, posters, static window decals and a number of digital elements to promote seat belt use.

A website has been created, www.seatbeltsrock.com, so teens and their families can get information, watch videos, and can even create and send a Virtual Valentine to their friends and family to remind them about the importance of buckling up.

The campaign is also incorporating strong visuals that will impact teens – in February, TxDOT will conduct a statewide tour of the dramatic remains of a truck involved in a roll-over crash. The truck’s teen driver and his passenger are alive having suffered only minimal injuries because of their safety belt use.