

# VERMONT GOVERNOR'S HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAM

Monthly Newsletter

March / April 2016

## Connecticut Seatbelt Summit

In early March, staff from the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) and the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) participated in the *Connecticut Seatbelt Summit*. The summit was an interactive, problem-solving dialogue, to address increasing the seat belt usage rates across the region's states.

The increasing unrestrained injury and fatality rates, coupled with decreasing seatbelt enforcement activity, appear to be common issues in many states.

Like other states, Vermont also concluded we must set realistic goals, identify achievable outcomes, and select and implement strategies and countermeasures proven to change public behavior.

This summit demonstrated the importance of participation by partners and stakeholders, improve data collection, strategic operations, information sharing, outreach, monitoring, evaluation, adjustments, and outcomes. These combined steps allow us to work toward reaching the effective countermeasures, and understanding the changing trends around seatbelt use, enforcement, and behavior modification.



(L to R) Allan Fortin, Tanya Wells, Tom Fields, Mandy White, Jim Baraw, Evelyn McFarlane, Scott Davidson, and (John Filipek - Not in Photo)

## Distracted Driving

(Source: AAA Website, 2016)

Distracted driving is a deadly behavior. Federal estimates suggest that distraction contributes to 16% of all fatal crashes, leading to approximately 5,000 deaths every year. The American Automobile Association's (AAA) latest research discovered that distraction "latency" lasted an average of 27 seconds, meaning that, even after drivers put down their phone or stop fiddling with the navigation system, drivers aren't fully engaged with the driving task for another 27 seconds.

- Drivers spend more than half their time focused on things other than driving
- Distraction contributes to more than 5,000 traffic fatalities each year.
- Texting and phone calls aren't the only distractions. Passengers, eating, and in-car technologies can also cause distractions

Despite these facts, distracted driving consistently ranks as one of the traffic safety issues at the forefront of many drivers' thinking. Each year, more than 80% of drivers in the annual AAA Foundation Traffic Safety Culture Index cite distraction as a serious problem and a behavior that makes them feel less safe on the road. Nearly half of all people who say they feel less safe than they did five years ago say distracted driving by other drivers fuels their concerns.

AAA believes that improving our understanding of how mental and physical distractions impair drivers and by educating the public about avoiding distractions, we can eliminate these needless deaths.

## From the 2016 NHTSA Campaign Calendar

April: 7th - 16th  
Distracted Driving  
*U Drive, U Text,  
U Pay*



Coming in April:  
National Distracted  
Driver Awareness  
Month



## Our Mission Statement

*Working toward the goal of "Zero Deaths" by promoting highway safety awareness through education and enforcement, thereby reducing crashes, saving lives, and improving the overall quality of life for those using Vermont's roadways.*

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## Operation Traffic Safety without Borders

Vermont State Police and Department of Motor Vehicles Enforcement pictured with Sûreté du Québec, Highgate POE.



### Pedestrians - Facts

Pedestrians—people who travel by foot, wheelchair, stroller, or similar means, are among the most vulnerable users of the road.

- Male pedestrians are more likely to die or be injured in a motor vehicle crash.
- Young adult pedestrians are more likely than any other age group to be treated in the emergency room for crash-related injuries.
- The rate of pedestrian death generally increases with age.
- In 2015, 34% of all pedestrians killed in traffic crashes were legally intoxicated, with a blood alcohol concentration of greater than or equal to 0.08.
- Nearly one in four traffic deaths among children ages 14 and under are pedestrian deaths. ([CDC, 2016](#))

Counties. Site activities included 1 Checkpoint with 478 vehicles through that site, numerous patrols, 92 stops, 133 contacts, 43 written warnings, 6 speeding violations, 2 driving with license suspended, 12 other violations, 13 handheld tests given, 3 DUI's processed, (1 from the checkpoint, 2 from patrols.) Thank you to all the agencies that participated in this year's campaign. Your hard work helps keep our highways safe.

### Governors Highway Safety Program

Governors Highway Safety Program  
Agency of Transportation  
One National Life Drive  
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## Pedestrian Fatalities to Spike Ten percent in 2015

*"Anticipated to be Largest Annual Increase Ever" GHSA*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) estimates there will be a 10% increase in the number of persons on foot killed in traffic crashes in 2015, compared with the prior year. This annual GHSA Spotlight on Highway Safety Report provides the first look at 2015 pedestrian fatality trends, based on preliminary data reported by all 50 state highway safety agencies and the District of Columbia.

Since the Fatality Analysis Reporting System was established in 1975, the year-to-year change in the number of pedestrian fatalities has varied from a 10.5% decrease to an 8.1% increase. "Pedestrian safety is clearly a growing problem across the country.

Many factors could be contributing to this spike. An increase in motor vehicle travel, fueled in part by improved economic conditions and lower gas prices, coupled with the growing use of cell phones among walkers and drivers may be partially to blame. Additionally, vehicles are becoming more and more "crashworthy," meaning the likelihood of drivers and passengers surviving a crash is improving all the time. By contrast, pedestrians remain just as susceptible to injuries when hit by a motor vehicle."

It is important for us to understand the data underlying these crashes, so that states and localities can apply the right mix of engineering, education and enforcement to counteract this troubling trend. ([Read more at GHSA](#))

### St. Patrick's Day Report Out

By Tom Fields

St. Patrick 's Day Enforcement activities took place in Bennington and Chittenden

## Grant Writing Tips

- (1) Develop a solid Problem Statement that utilizes state and local data.
- (2) Make sure your grant addresses a necessary issue..
- (3) Make sure you have identified countermeasures for your specific program needs.
- (4) Make sure you have clearly listed all expected outcomes and program goals.
- (5) Try not to wait until the last minute to prepare and send your grant application in.
- (7) Keep in touch with us, changes in contacts, etc., and please ask us questions.
- (8) Before sending out your grant, be sure that it is complete, has all required data and signatures, Chiefs, Chairs, and Managers.

### Helpful Web Links

[Vermont Stats](#) [Counter Measures that Work](#), [CFR 1200](#), [CFR 200](#)

### Deaths on Vermont Roadways

Year	Deaths
2008	73
2009	73
2010	71
2011	54
2012	77
2013	71
2014	44
2015	57

**13 Deaths as of April 1st, 2016**

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[www.ghsp.vermont.gov](http://www.ghsp.vermont.gov)

If you have comments or suggestions for our newsletter, please send them to [james.baraw@vermont.gov](mailto:james.baraw@vermont.gov).