

# CTRAFFIC SAFETY Connection



August 2009

Connecting Oregon's Community Traffic Safety Advocates

Volume 7, Number 8



## Traffic Trivia

The following comes from [www.AnimatedTrafficLaw.org](http://www.AnimatedTrafficLaw.org), a nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing traffic-related injury and death by challenging driver assumptions of traffic law. We cannot determine the origin of the below information but they are thought-provoking to consider.

- Every two miles, the average driver makes four hundred observations, forty decisions, and one mistake.
- Once every five hundred miles, one of those mistakes leads to a near collision, and once every sixty-one thousand miles one of those mistakes leads to a crash.
- Distractions are the #1 cause for all automobile crashes. We see with our brain, not with our eyes. A brain "sees" what it is thinking about, not what the eyes are focused on.
- When driving, think about driving.



## Why Is Oregon's Belt Use Rate So High?

Nationwide data suggests that states with high belt use are generally those with the strongest laws, high fines, and active ongoing enforcement according to Carla Levinski, Occupant Protection Program Manager at ODOT—TSD. Her job involves educating the public and law enforcement regarding what the law requires and how to achieve compliance. In 2008 Oregon's belt use rate was 96%.

A strong law is critical in garnering support from law enforcement and the court system. "The law, backed by a good public education program, is the real cornerstone of Oregon's safety belt program," says Carla. The law itself is superior to other states' laws in several respects.

The law is "primary" meaning that law enforcement can stop a driver simply by observing noncompliance. Most states require that the officer stop the vehicle for some other violation before they can cite for lack of belt use.



As of July 2009, thirty states have a primary law and one, New Hampshire, has no law at all.

The law applies to all seating positions—not just the front seat. Only twenty-two states have safety belt laws that cover rear seating positions in addition to the front seats.

The law requires "proper" use instead of simply "use". Before the latest booster amendments articulated proper lap and shoulder belt use within the text of the law, enforcement relied on a 1992 Oregon Attorney General opinion defining proper use. The essence of that opinion was that if lawmakers intended to limit violation of the statute to "nonuse" rather than misuse, they wouldn't have bothered to insert the word "proper" in multiple locations throughout the law. Proper use is as intended by the vehicle or car seat manufacturer. It is our understanding that most states do not include the "proper" use requirement.

Oregon's penalty for "failure to properly use" is currently third highest in the nation at \$97.00, compared to a national average of around \$25.00.

## National Child Passenger Safety Week—September 12–19, 2009

**There is a 3 out of 4 chance that your child is not as secure as you think.**

Child injury prevention advocates statewide are gearing up for National Child Passenger Safety Week with expanded access to check-up events, educational outreach and overtime law enforcement. These efforts continue because motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading cause of death and injury for Oregon children. A child's risk of injury greatly increases in a crash if they are not appropriately restrained.

Although Oregon has a high safety belt use rate—96% in 2008, efforts need to continue to ensure that children are riding as safe as possible. This year the focus is on the benefits of using booster seats and the recommendation to keep infants riding rear facing longer.

The booster seat use rate in 2008 was only 57%. Even the most safety-conscious parents are often not aware of the need for booster seats or the danger their children face when improperly restrained in an adult safety belt. On a small child, the adult lap belt rides up over the stomach and the shoulder belt cuts across the neck.

4 STEPS FOR KIDS

 <b>1</b> REAR-FACING	 <b>2</b> FORWARD-FACING	 <b>3</b> BOOSTER	 <b>4</b> SEAT BELT
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# ACTS Oregon

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## Featured Board Member

Jan Robertson is Regional Manager for AAA Oregon/Idaho. During her career with AAA she has held several positions. Currently she is Regional Manager for the Portland and Bend Service Centers. AAA is a membership organization, 55 million strong, providing an array of services: Insurance, Travel, Financial and Roadside Assistance.



Since 1947 the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has funded over 170 research projects designed to discover the causes of traffic crashes, prevent them, and minimize injuries when they do occur. AAA has used this research to develop educational materials for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and other road users.

In 2001 AAA Oregon offered Car Seat technician training to employees. Jan jumped at the chance to become involved and has continued to be an active participant at car seat clinics. "AAA has

been involved with traffic safety since it's inception, so it was a natural fit for AAA to promote child passenger safety," said Jan. "Educating the public on the correct way to install a child safety seat is a rewarding experience. There are many more safe little passengers because of the clinics planned and supported by ACTS Oregon."

Jan accepted a nomination to the ACTS board in 2008. "As the newest member of the board I continue to be amazed at the activities and support that ACTS Oregon provides to communities around the state." Jan serves on the Marketing Committee, "Our challenge for the coming year is to increase the ACTS Oregon membership base. It's a great organization, so everyone should want to be a member. If you haven't joined yet, it's easy! Just visit [www.actsoregon.org](http://www.actsoregon.org)."



## City of Tigard

The City of Tigard is a recipient of a 2009 Bicycle Safety Mini Grant. Their project is titled the *Tigard Bicycle Safety Initiative*. The goal of this project is to host bicycle safety education and inspections within the six affordable housing complexes in the City of Tigard. To accomplish this task the city has partnered with Tigard Police Department Bicycle Safety Unit and the Washington County Bicycle Transportation Coalition.

At each of the locations trained coalition volunteers will check bicycles for safety, fit helmets, and teach bike maintenance. Police officers inform participants on the rules of the road and offer tips on how to stay safe when riding. Lights and cable locks are also distributed to participants to help them have a safe riding experience.

This project is just one example of a successful Mini Grant project. Applications for 2010 Bicycle Safety Mini Grants are due September 11, 2009. If you would like assistance with project development or have any questions please contact Kate Murphy [katem@actsoregon.org](mailto:katem@actsoregon.org), 503-643-5620, 800-772-1315.

## Independence, Oregon

On June 17th the Independence Police Department hosted a bicycle helmet day for low-income children. According to Carl Nightengale, Traffic Safety Technician, the event was very successful. Volunteers distributed all available helmets.



Thanks are extended to Rachael Graham, of Eckmans's State Farm Insurance Company in Monmouth. Rachael and Police Department employee Andrea Cogburn worked tirelessly throughout the event fitting helmets. Thanks also go out to the Dallas Wal-Mart store.

The second helmet distribution event was held at National Night Out, on Tuesday, August 4th, in Riverside Park.

Officers of the police department also carry bicycle helmets in their patrol vehicles, which are given to children in violation of helmet laws with a warning rather than a citation.

The Police Department's traffic safety program charges a sustainability fee of \$1 per helmet, which helps them purchase more helmets.

This helmet distribution project is funded by a

Building Safer Communities Mini Grant. Applications for 2010 Mini Grants are now available at the ACTS Oregon website and are due September 11, 2009. If you have any questions about the program please contact Kate Murphy [katem@actsoregon.org](mailto:katem@actsoregon.org), 503-643-5620, 800-772-1315.

## Code 4

Code 4 Public Safety Education is a non profit organization offering training courses to law enforcement and public safety personnel in the Pacific Northwest for over 14 years.

One of the most rewarding training courses offered is the traffic and seat belt safety programs in which many of the courts in Central & Southern Oregon use for their court mandated traffic violation programs. This program is also offered to the general public as a tool to help prepare new drivers.

Here are a few topics from our program:

- The Benefits of Safety Belts/ Why Use Them
- Drinking & Driving

- Child Safety Seats / It's the Law
- Attention Issues, Cell Phone, Eating
- Fatality Rates
- Road Rage, Reducing Stress
- Safety Belt Excuses
- Turns, Stop Lights, Signs, School Zones
- What Happens in a Crash
- Rules of the Road

Instructors are well trained in traffic laws and are often off duty or former police officers from other jurisdictions. Attendees are provided with a certificate of attendance to take back to the courts. An online version of the traffic & seat belt safety education course is also offered.

So, whether a person attends one of the traffic/seat belt safety courses because of court sanctions and mandates or because a family wants to prepare their young drivers it is a great resource to educate the public in an effort to keep our roads a safer place.

## Klamath Falls Technician Class

Klamath Falls will never be the same again! A group of Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Instructors descended upon this small community in June to

offer a CPS Certification Course. A BIG Thank You, to Chad Tramp for his dedication to the CPS program over the years and for all his support and assistance for this class. You are a CPS Warrior!



ACTS Oregon welcomes the 19 newest CPS Technicians in Oregon—Paula Brown & Elanor Jackson—**Klamath Tribal Health and Family Services**, Brian Kreis—**Jackson County Sheriff's Office Volunteer**, Tyler Humphries—**Rural/Metro Fire Department Grants Pass**, Sandra Aquino, Marian Banes, Kevin Larsen, Daisy Gomez, Babenna Ramirez—**Oregon Child Development Coalition**, Angie Robin, Cheri Monerth, Mary

Oleachea, Rebecca Meek, Lori Fitzpatrick—**Sky Lakes Medical Center**, Brian Simons, Don Manning—**Jackson County, Fire District #3**, Jim Poore—**Klamath County Fire District #1**, Chrys Dawes—**Klamath Falls City Schools**, Sharon Mason—**Confederated Tribes of Siletz**.

Special thanks to Heather Tramp for your facility and dining assistance and to Phil and his staff at the Best Western Olympic Inn. You were all wonderful hosts and quick to meet all our needs.

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## National Child Passenger Safety Week

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In a crash, this could cause serious or even fatal injuries. Children generally outgrow convertible child safety seats when they are 40 pounds. From 40 to about 80 pounds. and about 4'9" tall, children should always be seated in a belt-positioning booster; lifting them so adult lap/shoulder safety belts are "positioned" correctly and safely. Plus, booster seats offer children better visibility and comfort.

Oregon law requires children to ride rear facing until they are 1 year of age and 20 pounds. Current research is encouraging families to keep their children riding rear facing longer.

According to a 2008 article in the professional journal *Pediatrics* children under age two are 75% less likely to be killed or suffer severe injuries in a crash if they are riding rear facing. In fact, for children 1–2 years of age, facing the rear is five times safer. Most babies outgrow the typical

infant only seat before they are nine months old, but they are not ready for a forward facing seat. New convertible seats allow children to remain rear facing until they weight 30–35 pounds, depending on the model.

Babies have heavy heads and fragile necks. In a crash, an infant's soft spinal column can stretch, leading to spinal cord damage if they are riding facing forward. The baby could die or be paralyzed permanently. This is true even for babies who have strong neck muscles and good head control. The neck bones are flexible and the ligaments are loose to allow for growth.

If the baby is facing forward in a frontal crash, which is the most common and most severe type, the body is held back by the harness straps—but the head is not. The head is thrust forward, stretching the neck and the easily injured spinal cord. Older children in forward facing safety seats or safety belts may end up with temporary neck injuries or fractures that will heal. But a baby's neck bones actually separate during a crash, which can allow the spinal cord to be ripped apart.

In contrast, when a baby rides facing rearward, the whole body—head, neck and torso—is cradled by the back of the safety seat in a frontal crash. Riding in a rear facing safety seat also protects the baby better in other types of crashes, particularly side impacts. Side impacts are extremely dangerous but not quite so common.

The SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. flier *How Long Should Children Ride Facing the Back of the Car?* is posted at [www.childsafetyseat.org](http://www.childsafetyseat.org) under Child Passenger Safety/Educational Materials. It is also being included in the FREE educational materials packet for Child Passenger Safety Week. To order these materials visit [www.childsafetyseat.org/store.html](http://www.childsafetyseat.org/store.html).



## Check Up Clinics and Fitting Stations

Please check [www.childsafetyseat.org](http://www.childsafetyseat.org) under Child Passenger Safety/Calendar for current list, specific dates, locations and times.

Date	City	Location	Address	Time
8/29/09	Beaverton	City Hall	4755 SW Griffith Drive	9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.
8/29/09	Clackamas	Town Center	12000 SE 82nd Avenue	10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.
9/02/09	Madras	Jefferson County Fire Department	765 Adams Drive	10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.
9/03/09	Redmond	Fire Department	341 Dogwood Avenue	10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.
9/09/09	McMinnville	Fire Department	Call 503-435-5803 for Appointment	
9/10/09	Ontario	Fire Department	444 NW 4th Street	4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.
9/10/09	St. Helens	Columbia River Fire & Rescue	105 S 12th Street	4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.
9/12/09	Beaverton	City Hall	4755 SW Griffith Drive	9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.
9/12/09	Newberg	Fire Department	3100 Middlebrook Drive	9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.
9/16/09	Corvallis	Fire Department	400 NW Harrison Street	8:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.
9/16/09	Bend	Fire Department	1212 SW Simpson	10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.
9/17/09	Redmond	Fire Department	Call 541-504-5000 for Appointment	
9/17/09	Beaverton	NW Jeep Chrysler Dodge	10600 SW Canyon Road	5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

## Mini Grant Dates

Reminder that Building Safer Communities Mini Grant and Bicycle Safety Mini Grant applications are due September 11, 2009. Applications are posted at [www.actsoregon.org](http://www.actsoregon.org) under Community Traffic Safety/Grants. Located on this page as well is a listing of current grantees and their project titles.

If you have any questions about either of these grant opportunities please contact Kate Murphy [katem@actsoregon.org](mailto:katem@actsoregon.org), 503-643-5620 or 800-772-1315.

## Klamath Falls Technician Class

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Thank you, to the instructor team for your dedication and sacrifices you make to support our program! Klamath Falls Instructor team: Technician Assistant: Kevin Watt—**Medford Fire Department**. CPS Instructors: Lucie Drum—**American Medical Response**, Doris Girt—**Vancouver Police Department**, Scott Downing and Dan Marcisz—**Jackson County Sheriff's Office**, Sandy Holt—**ACTS Oregon**.



# 2009 Oregon Transportation SAFETY CONFERENCE

## Facing the Challenge of Change

**Join ODOT—Transportation Safety Division and ACTS Oregon,**

**October 27 to 29**

**at the Best Western Hood River Inn**