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Utah Department of Public Safety
Highway Safety Office

TOGETHER FOR LIFE PROJECT

SCHOOL LEADER BOOKLET

A Project To Increase Seat Belt Use
In Utah's Rural Communities



School leaders are in a position to increase motor vehicle occupant protection among their staff and their students. **USING SEAT BELTS SAVES LIVES.¹**



As a leader
in your community,
we need your support to
make this effort successful
and improve the health
and safety of our rural
communities.

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TOGETHER FOR LIFE – PROJECT PURPOSE

The Together for Life Project is a multi-year pilot project for Utah’s rural communities initiated by the Utah Department of Public Safety to confront the seriousness of not wearing a seat belt and build hope that communities can work together to reduce risk and create positive change. Building on the strengths of Utah residents and resources within their communities, the Together for Life Project offers strategies to increase seat belt use and engage core stakeholders across Utah.

Being properly restrained in a seat belt is “one of the most effective measures a person can take to prevent injury and death in a crash.”¹



A Call to Action for School Leaders

Schools are often considered the hub of a community. Schools are tasked with helping students learn academically, but schools also play an important role in guiding youth to make healthy and safe choices and to avoid risky ones in their personal lives. Seat belt use is an important topic because motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for young people ages 5 to 24.² In 2017, on average, 3 children were killed every day in traffic crashes.³

According to the 2020 Utah Crash Summary:

- There were 276 traffic deaths in Utah and 65 of those deaths were children and teens aged 19 and younger.⁴
- Over the past 7 years, an estimated 411 people would have been saved had they been wearing a seat belt.⁴

School leaders are in a position to increase motor vehicle occupant protection among their staff and their students. Using seat belts saves lives.¹

Together For Life—Project Purpose

The goal of this booklet is to help school leaders guide conversations about seat belt use and close misperception gaps among school district staff and students. The booklet includes:

- a call to action for school leaders;
- facts about seat belt use in this county; and
- specific strategies to promote positive traffic safety behaviors among school district staff, students, and parents.

This booklet will help school leaders build on the strengths and resources that already exist in order to foster change and transformation.



Two important surveys were completed to inform this project.

The first survey gathered beliefs and behaviors from adults about seat belts and getting others to wear a seat belt. The survey was conducted by the Center for Health and Safety Culture within the Western Transportation Institute of Montana State University. The survey that gathered beliefs and behaviors from Utah adults was implemented using a paper survey mailed to a random sample of households in multiple rural counties.

The second survey, the Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) Survey, was administered by the State of Utah. The survey is conducted every odd calendar year to students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. The results of this survey are utilized throughout this booklet.

FACTS ABOUT SEAT BELT USE AMONG ADULTS IN UINTAH COUNTY

FACT IS:

MOST Adults Always Wear Seat Belts

	Uintah
Observed Seat Belt Use, 2014 ²	65%
Observed Seat Belt Use, 2015 ²	69%
Observed Seat Belt Use, 2016 ²	64%
Observed Seat Belt Use, 2017 ²	71%
Observed Seat Belt Use, 2018 ²	73%
Observed Seat Belt Use, 2019 ²	78%
Self-Reported “Always” Wear a Seat Belt, 2019 ³	72%

MOST Adults Believe Wearing Seat Belts Is Important

	Uintah
Adults agree “it is important to protect myself by always wearing a seat belt” ³	96%
Adults agree they should always wear a seat belt ³	96%
Adults agree they want people they care about to always wear a seat belt ³	96%
Adults report having a family rule about wearing a seat belt (among those with families) ³	73%

MOST Adults Support Enforcement of Seat Belt Laws

	Uintah
Adults who agreed that local law enforcement should enforce Utah seat belt laws ³	64%

MOST Adults Believe It Is Their Responsibility As A Driver To Make Sure Others Are Wearing A Seat Belt.

	Uintah
Adults who believe it is their responsibility to make sure others were wearing their seat belts when they are the driver ³	68%

FACTS ABOUT SEAT BELT USE AMONG STUDENTS IN UINTAH COUNTY

FACT IS:

85%

- Most students wear a seat belt.⁷
- **85%** of Uintah students strongly agree or agree they want people they care about to always wear a seat belt.⁷

65%

- **65%** of Uintah students strongly agree or agree that if they were in a vehicle with their friends, and someone was not wearing a seat belt, they should ask them to wear a seat belt.⁷
- **Most** students reported that if they were in a vehicle with their friends and someone was not wearing a seat belt, they would likely ask them to wear a seat belt.⁷



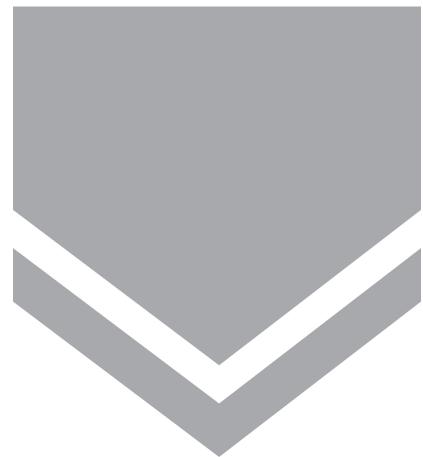
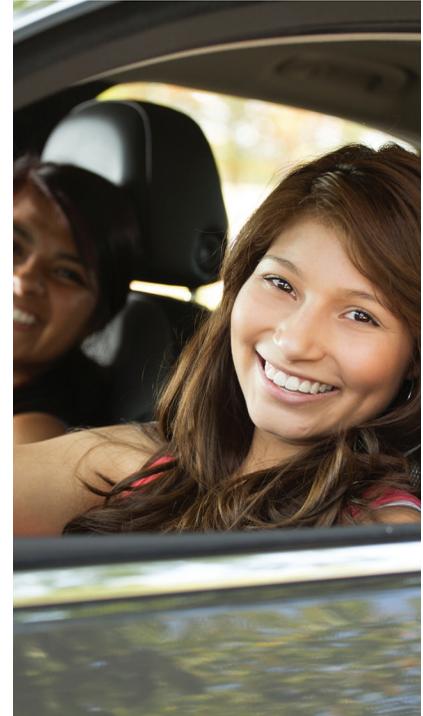
PROMOTING POSITIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY BEHAVIORS

Addressing seat belt use requires creating a balance of concern and hope. Although choosing not to wear a seat belt can have devastating consequences, it is important to remember that there is hope. Most adults⁶ and students⁷ in the county are wearing their seat belts. As a school leader seeking to increase traffic safety behaviors, it is recommended that the focus be on the positive behaviors the school is seeking to grow among their staff and students instead of the negative behaviors they are seeking to change.

To increase seat belt use it may seem that scare tactics could be effective. The crashed car from a person who wasn't wearing a seat belt or a visual display of the number of lives lost to motor-vehicle crashes as a result of not wearing a seat belt are examples of scare tactics. Tactics that evoke feelings of guilt, shame, or embarrassment have been tried. Unfortunately, these shame based tactics, although intended to evoke change, can instead become paralyzing and make change difficult.⁸

Focusing on what is working and what is going well has been shown to be effective in various domains and this same strategy can be applied to schools and their efforts to increase seat belt use among their staff and their students. Using a positive frame, focusing on what is right and working well, and capitalizing on the strengths that already exist are important.

School leaders can promote positive traffic safety behaviors by focusing on targeted strategies at the district level with staff, with students in elementary school, middle school, and high school, with parents, and community members.



STRATEGIES ACROSS THE SOCIAL ECOLOGY

Tools provided in the School Leader Booklet are designed specifically for the layers of the social ecology in schools including school district staff (teachers, administrators, coaches, and activity leaders), students, and parents. When addressing health and safety issues, it is important to use multiple strategies that reach across the social ecology. The social ecology recognizes levels of social relationships that influence people's choices. Using this approach, behavior change is influenced by our interactions with one another and is shaped by the environments in which we live.⁹

The School Leader Booklet contains three sections. Each section represents a specific layer of the social ecology in schools: School District Staff, Students, and Parents. Within each section there are a variety of tools that can be used for that layer of the social ecology. The tools can be adapted and personalized.



Section 1. School District Staff

Tool 1.1. A Three-Step Strategy to Increase Seat Belt Use Among School District Staff

- Step 1: Clarify School District Norms
- Step 2: Codify Norms in School District Policy
- Step 3: Enforce School District Policy

Tool 1.2. Selecting Targeted Seat Belt Programs for Students

Tool 1.3. Making Curricula Decisions

Tool 1.4. Conversations About Seat Belt Use



Section 2. Parents and the Community

Tool 2.1. A Sample Parent Letter

Tool 2.2. Seat Belt Fact Sheet for Parents

Tool 2.3 Sample Statements for Community Conversations

SECTION 1. SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF



Tools to Increase Seat Belt Use Among School District Staff

School leaders are in a position to positively influence seat belt use behavior among school district staff. The good news is that adults in your county already share unifying values about seat belt use and they also share critical attitudes and beliefs that are protective. This section provides tools that can be implemented to engage school district staff in conversations about seat belt use and to ultimately improve health and safety.

Tool 1.1. A Three-Step Strategy to Increase Seat Belt Use Among School District Staff

Step 1: Clarify School District Norms About Using Seat Belts

- Sample Email About Always Wearing a Seat Belt
- Sample Email About Student Seat Belt Use
- Conversation Guide on Always Wearing a Seat Belt

Step 2: Codify Norms in School District Policy

- PowerPoint Presentation
- Together for Life Card

Step 3: Enforce School District Policy

Tool 1.2. Selecting Targeted Seat Belt Programs for Students

Tool 1.3. Making Curricula Decisions

Tool 1.4. Conversations About Seat Belt Use

TOOL 1.1. A THREE-STEP STRATEGY TO INCREASE SEAT BELT USE AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF

School leaders can help improve health and safety by increasing seat belt use among school district staff and students. Students will behave in similar ways to adults because they model behavior. Not wearing a seat belt puts school district staff at greater risk for injury or even death in a work-related crash.

Step 1: Clarify School District Norms About Using Seat Belts

The first step in increasing seat belt use among school district staff is to clarify norms. This process will establish an important foundation for a district policy to codify those norms and establish clear expectations for behavior.

What are Norms?

Norms are values, beliefs, or behaviors shared by most members of a group or community. Communities have norms; teams have norms; and workplaces have norms.

Examples of shared values include a commitment to safety, honesty, and hard work. Shared beliefs may include expectations like officers should model legal behaviors, and shared behaviors may be that police officers always wear a seat belt.

Norms are powerful because they provide guidance on how we fit in with the culture. Workplace norms are particularly powerful as they guide how new and existing employees will behave.

Norms are not the same as policies or rules. Policies and rules codify norms – they make norms explicit. However, we have all experienced a work environment where the norm in an organization contradicts the actual policy.

Norms are often misunderstood. For example, while most adults do NOT smoke cigarettes, high school students often perceive that most adults do smoke. That is, students think the norm is that most adults smoke – when in reality – that is NOT the norm. However, this misperception puts these students at greater risk for smoking.

The 2020 survey of Uintah adults revealed misperceptions of norms.



While most adults always wear a seat belt,

very few, 14%, adults in Uintah believe most adults in their county always wear a seat belt.

While 93% of Uintah adults agree they should always wear a seat belt,

few, 32%, adults in Uintah believe most adults in their community would strongly agree it is important to protect themselves by always wearing a seat belt.

While 68% of drivers in Uintah believe it is their responsibility to get others to wear a seat belt,

few, 27%, believe most adults in their community would strongly agree it is the driver's responsibility to get others to wear a seat belt.

SAMPLE EMAIL ABOUT ALWAYS WEARING A SEAT BELT

From: [School Administrator]

To: All Staff

RE: Seat Belt Use

According to the 2020 Utah Fatal Crash Summary:

- There were 276 traffic deaths in Utah and 65 of those deaths were children and teens aged 19 and younger.¹
- Over the past 7 years, an estimated 411 people would have been saved had they been wearing a seat belt (2020).¹

The good news is that adults² and students³ in our county are already engaging in protective beliefs and behaviors. Most adults always wear seat belts and most students always wear seat belts when riding in a vehicle driven by someone else. Being properly restrained in a seat belt is “one of the most effective measures a person can take to prevent injury and death in a crash.”⁴

Not only is it important for all of us to wear seat belts for our own protection, but to also recognize that we model behaviors for our students. Our actions speak louder than our words. We will be discussing seat belt use and our school district policy about always wearing a seat belt at our next staff meeting.

[signature]

References

1. National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2019, May). *Children: 2017 data. (Traffic Safety Facts. Report No. DOT HS 812 719)*. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
2. Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2019, 2020). *Utah community survey of adults on seat belt use*. Montana State University. (N=3114, N=673)
3. State of Utah Department of Human Services Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (2021). *Student Health and Risk Prevention, Prevention Needs Assessment Survey Results*. Retrieved from <http://dsamh.utah.gov>
4. Dunn, L., Holliday, A., & Vegega, M. (2016, March). *Motor vehicle occupant protection facts – Children, youth, young adults (Fact book. Report No. DOT HS 812 251)*. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



SAMPLE EMAIL ABOUT STUDENT SEAT BELT USE

From: [School Administrator]

To: All Staff

RE: Student Seat Belt Use

A recent survey of our students revealed:

- Most students wear a seat belt.¹
- 85% of Uintah students who responded to the survey strongly agree or agree they want people they care about to always wear a seat belt.¹
- 65% of Uintah students who responded to the survey strongly agree or agree that if they are in a vehicle with their friends, and someone is not wearing a seat belt, they should ask them to wear a seat belt.¹

These beliefs and behaviors among our students are positive and we want to encourage these behaviors to continue. Please promote these positive beliefs and behaviors that already exist among our students.

[Signature]

Reference

1. State of Utah Department of Human Services Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (2021). *Student Health and Risk Prevention, Prevention Needs Assessment Survey Results*. Retrieved from <http://dsamh.utah.gov>





CONVERSATION GUIDE ON ALWAYS WEARING A SEAT BELT

Please copy both pages and provide to participants.

Purpose

Clarify existing norms about seat belts; reveal gaps between values, beliefs, and behaviors; and motivate action to change.

Guidance

Active, two-way conversation is one of the best ways to foster lasting, sustainable change in beliefs and behaviors. We often have a tendency to move right to action (such as just creating a rule and telling everyone to follow it). However, if we spend time aligning values and beliefs (e.g., the why behind the rule), it will help the rule become naturally ingrained into the culture. There will be less resistance and push back, and compliance will be easier.

Conversations can occur between two people (an administrator and teacher) or among small groups. We strongly recommend keeping the group size to four people or fewer – smaller is more effective. It is critical that everyone is actively engaged in the conversation.

We strongly encourage you to invest at least 15-20 minutes for these conversations in one session.

Tips for Effective Conversations

- Encourage broad participation – don't allow one person to dominate, seek input from everyone.
- Build connections between various thoughts – listen for what is emerging.
- Provide enough time for meaningful engagement – this investment will pay off many times over in the future.

Background on the Utah Community Survey

The Center for Health and Safety Culture developed a survey to better understand the beliefs and behaviors from adults in this county about seat belts and getting others to wear a seat belt. The survey was conducted between September 26, 2020 and November 6, 2020. The survey was implemented using a paper survey mailed to a random sample of households in each county. A letter was sent by the Utah Highway Safety Office to each selected household introducing the survey. This letter was followed by a survey, a reminder postcard, and an additional survey. In Uintah, 335 individuals responded.



Conversation Guide Directions

1. Group size should be four people or smaller. If the group is larger than four people, break into smaller groups and allow additional time for groups to share thoughts between topics.
2. Provide a copy of this page for all participants.
3. Discuss each topic in order. Spend about 7-10 minutes on each topic depending on group size (allow more time for groups of 3 or 4 and more time to share out with multiple groups).

Topic #1.

A recent survey of adults in Uintah County revealed:

- 96% of Uintah adults want people they care about to ALWAYS wear a seat belt.⁶
- 73% of Uintah adults report their family has a rule about ALWAYS wearing a seat belt.⁶

Questions

- > What surprises you about these results?
- > What do these results say about adults in Uintah County?
- > How do these results reflect staff in this school?

[If there is more than one group, share key points from each group.]

Topic #2.

Three more results from the survey:

- 96% of Uintah adults agree “It is important to protect myself by always wearing a seat belt.”⁶
- 93% of Uintah adults agree “I should always wear a seat belt.”⁶
- AND YET 22% of Uintah adults report NOT wearing a seat belt in the past week.⁶

Questions

- > What factors may lead to the discrepancy between beliefs about seat belts and actually using a seat belt?
- > Within your area of influence, what can you do to impact the use of seat belts?

[If there is more than one group, share key points from each group.]

For more information about seat belt use in our county,
visit www.togetherforlifeutah.org

STEP 2: CODIFY NORMS IN SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY

After clarifying norms with all employees, it is important to codify the district's expectations about all employees and students wearing a seat belt when driving or riding as a passenger in a district vehicle equipped with seat belts. Wearing a seat belt is an important component of safety and should be required by policy.

Review your current policy and make sure it is up-to-date.

Here are several important items to consider as you review the district's policy:

- Does the policy assign responsibility to the driver for making sure everyone is wearing a seat belt?
- Does the policy make it clear that administrators are expected to enforce the policy?
- Does the policy establish clear consequences for not wearing a seat belt?

After updating your policy, make sure you share and discuss it with all district employees. Provide an opportunity to clarify any questions. Engaging in dialogue about the policy will make it real and establish clear expectations.



Sample Seat Belt Policy

[Name of School District] believes that seat belts are very important. Seat belts save lives and reduce the risk of serious injury. At [School District], we care about our employees and our students. The safety of our employees and students is our number one priority. It is the expectation at [School District] that all employees and students always wear a seat belt when operating a vehicle or riding in vehicle. Additionally, it is our policy that employees are expected to always wear a seat belt and ensure everyone is always wearing a seat belt when conducting school business. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that everyone in his or her vehicle is always wearing a seat belt. Noncompliance of this policy will result in corrective action. [Such action could include: a verbal warning, a written warning, suspending the use of a district vehicle, etc.]

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

You will need:

- a computer and projector;
- PowerPoint slides downloaded from togetherforlifeutah.org;
- copies of your school district Seat Belt Use Policy; and
- Together For Life Card downloaded from togetherforlifeutah.org.

SLIDE 1.

**TOGETHER
FOR LIFE**

**BUILDING A
CULTURE OF
SAFETY**

WWW.TOGETHERFORLIFEUTAH.ORG

Presenter Notes:
This slide is the introduction to your presentation. Introduce yourself. Share that employees are at your presentation to obtain information about the seat belt use policy being implemented in the workplace.

(Slides continued on next page)

SLIDE 2.



2. OUTLINE

- Seat Belts in the Workplace....Why is it Important?
- Shared Beliefs and Behaviors
- What’s Your Reason?
- It’s a Priority at [Workplace Name]!
- The Seat Belt Use Policy at [Workplace name].
- What You Need to Do and Know...
- It’s Everyone’s Responsibility.

Presenter Notes:
This slide is meant to provide the audience with a snap shot of what is to come in your presentation.

SLIDE 3.



**3. SEAT BELTS IN THE WORKPLACE...
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
BECAUSE... YOU ARE IMPORTANT!**

Presenter Notes:
The purpose of this slide is to share the latest information about the importance of always wearing a seat belt. Some important statistics include:

- A motor vehicle crash occurs approximately every 10 minutes in Utah.¹
- A person is injured in a crash approximately every 33 minutes in Utah.¹
- Unrestrained crash occupants were over 14 times more likely to be killed than restrained crash occupants.¹
- Seat belts are used less frequently in rural areas of Utah than in urban areas.¹
- Rural crashes were 2.8 times more likely to be fatal than urban crashes.¹
- Occupants in rural crashes were 3.4 times more likely to be unrestrained than urban occupants.¹

The take away message from this slide is that the school district cares about its employees and seat belts are essential. Buckling your seat belt can save your life!

SLIDE 4.



4. SHARED BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS

Presenter Notes:

The purpose of this slide is to connect all employees based on their shared values, beliefs and behaviors about seat belt use. Most adults in Uintah County (93%) agree that they should always wear a seat belt, and most adults always wear a seat belt.⁴ Most drivers in Uintah County (68%) believe it is their responsibility to get others to wear a seat belt.⁴ Most in Uintah County (91%) agreed they are comfortable asking others to wear a seat belt, and most drivers in Uintah County (80%) are asking others to wear a seat belt.⁴ Highlighting the shared protective beliefs and behaviors about seat belt use helps to grow these protective beliefs and behaviors.

SLIDE 5.



5. WHAT'S YOUR REASON?

Presenter Notes:
Discuss the reasons people have for wearing a seat belt.

SLIDE 6.



TOGETHER FOR LIFE

6. IT'S A PRIORITY AT (WORKPLACE NAME).

Presenter Notes:
The goal of this slide is to provide a clear understanding that there are no excuses for not wearing a seat belt and the expectation at your workplace is that everyone will always wear a seat belt.

SLIDE 7.



TOGETHER FOR LIFE

7. OUR SEAT BELT USE POLICY.

Presenter Notes:
(Provide a copy of your workplace policy).
Discuss the policy and answer any questions employees have about the seat belt use policy.

SLIDE 8.**8. WHAT YOU NEED TO DO AND KNOW...****Presenter Notes:**

The purpose of this slide is to provide a detailed explanation of what employees need to do to comply with the seat belt policy, and what the consequences will be if the policy is not followed. Remember, effective communication reduces employees' uncertainty¹⁰ and is vital to the successful implementation of a seat belt use policy in the workplace.

SLIDE 9.**9. IT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.****Presenter Notes:**

(Provide Together for Life Card). Have employees complete Together for Life Card and discuss their answers with their coworkers as an interactive learning opportunity. This is the conclusion of your presentation. Wrap up the discussion by highlighting the desired behaviors you are seeking to grow. Those include always wearing a seat belt and getting others to always wear a seat belt. Growing protection and reducing harm associated with not wearing a seat belt requires everyone to get involved.

TOGETHER FOR LIFE CARD

The following card can be found at togetherforlifeutah.org and can be distributed to staff. The card is based on an intervention shown to increase seat belt use among non-users.¹¹

TOGETHER FOR LIFE
Uintah

Did you know?

Utah crash data show that unrestrained crash occupants were over 14 times more likely to be killed than restrained crash occupants.¹

Seat belts are the best protection.

MOST Uintah County adults, 96%, want people they care about to always wear a seat belt.²

MOST Uintah County adults, 72%, always wear their seat belts.²

MOST Uintah County adults, 68%, believe it is the driver's responsibility to make sure others are wearing their seat belts.²

www.togetherforlifeutah.org

Choosing to be Together For Life

Is it important to...

Be a good role model for your children by always wearing a seat belt?

Avoid being injured or killed in a traffic crash?

Avoid getting a ticket?

Avoid a lifelong disability?

Know that people who care about you want you to always wear a seat belt?

Follow your family rules about always wearing a seat belt?

Follow your workplace rules about always wearing a seat belt?

Which one is most important to you? Think about this every time the vehicle starts. Choose to be Together for Life. Always wear a seat belt.

1. Utah Department of Public Safety, Highway Safety Office, Utah Crash Data and Statistics, Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Department of Public Safety, Retrieved from <https://highwaysafety.utah.gov/crash-data/>

2. Center for Health and Safety Culture, (2020). Utah community survey of adults on seat belt use in Uintah County, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana. (p.35)

3. Frensdorff, W. G., Mitchell, P. M., Jamnanka, A. S., Winter, M. R., Bullock, H., Donovan, J., ... Callan, T. (2008). Brief Motivational Intervention to Increase Self-reported Safety Belt Use among Emergency Department Patients. Academic Emergency Medicine, 15(5), 419-425. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1553-2712.2008.0096.x>

www.togetherforlifeutah.org

STEP 3: ENFORCE SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY

To achieve high seat belt use, the policy must be enforced.

Here are a few tips:

- Make sure the policy is accessible for employees and consider requiring a signed acknowledgment that each employee has received the policy, read it, and understands it.
- Have a process in place to ensure that all newly hired employees have access to the policy, are provided education about the district's policy, and understand the consequences of not following the policy.
- Reinforce expectations about following the policy in staff meetings.
- Include a section on following policies in annual performance evaluations.
- Revisit the policy on a regular basis during trainings.

TOOL 1.2. SELECTING SEAT BELT PROGRAMS

When deciding to address seat belt use, school leaders may decide to selected a targeted program that can be implemented at the elementary school, middle school, and/or high school level.

Elementary School Students



The Click It Club program aims to teach kids about the importance of wearing their seat belts properly (including booster seats), teach parents that they need to buckle kids before they leave the school property and whenever they are in a car, and use kids' influence to get their parents and other family members to buckle up.

For more information about the program, call 801-965-4400.

Middle School and High School Students

PARENT NIGHT

Parent involvement is key to preventing crashes among new drivers. Zero Fatalities Parent Night presentations help parents make a positive impact on their teen's learning experience. For more than a decade, parents have given overwhelmingly positive reviews to these 60-minute presentations addressing some of the top behaviors teen drivers need to know. They help teens establish safe driving habits and remind parents to be better examples, so we can all reach our goal of Zero Fatalities.

<https://zerofatalities.com/parent-night/>

TRUCK SMART

Did you know that approximately ¼ of all vehicles on Utah roads are large trucks? Nationally, over 75% of auto vs. truck crashes are caused by negligent driving on the part of the auto driver. By understanding just how massive these trucks are, how large their blind spots are, and how much room they need to operate and come to a stop, our roads and highways can be a much safer place for everyone.

<https://trucksmart.udot.utah.gov/how-truck-smart-are-you/>

Alive at 25[®]

Alive at 25 is a young-driver intervention program developed by the National Safety Council for drivers between 15 and 24 years of age. The program was implemented in Utah in 2007 and includes a 4.5-hour course that focuses on the decision-making processes and behaviors that young drivers and passengers display in a motor vehicle and is designed to prevent the No. 1 killer of teens: automobile crashes.

For more information contact the Utah Safety Council at 801-746-7233 or call toll-free 800-933-5943.

TOOL 1.3. MAKING CURRICULA DECISIONS

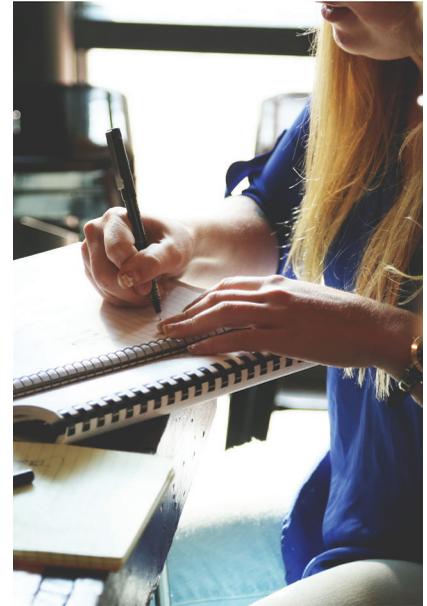
Health education curriculum and driver education curriculum are two established avenues for engaging students about seat belt use. School leaders are encouraged to look at their curricula.

Health Education

To ensure that every student is exposed to a discussion about the importance of always wearing a seat belt, one starting place is to look at the health curriculum being taught to students. Specific questions can help you to identify strengths and potential gaps.

Critical Questions

1. Does the health curriculum specifically address seat belt use?
2. Does the health curriculum include accurate normative information that most students and most adults always wear a seat belt?
3. Does the health curriculum include role playing and/or skill building strategies to bolster skills to intervene and engage with others about always wearing a seat belt?
4. Does the health curriculum follow Utah Core Standard for Health Education?



Utah Core Standard for Health Education

Health Education I (grades 7-8)

Standard 3: Safety and Disease Prevention (SDP) Students will apply practical knowledge and skills to develop lifelong behaviors for personal and community well-being.

1. Demonstrate proficiency in basic first-aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).
2. Demonstrate how to apply thoughtful decision-making in health-related situations (for example, substance use, **vehicle safety**, sun safety, recreational safety, firearm safety, physical activity, nutritional choices).
3. Investigate the effects of media and technology on mental, emotional, physical, and social health (for example, dopamine levels, sleep).
4. Identify how to maintain a healthy online relationship and the potential consequences of sharing private information using technology including photos and videos.
5. Explain the harmful effects of pornography and recognize that recovery is possible.
6. Compare and contrast the signs, symptoms, prevention methods, and risk factors of infectious, acute, and chronic diseases.
7. Demonstrate how to access valid and reliable health information, products, and services.

Health Education II (grades 9-12)

Standard 3: Safety and Disease Prevention (SDP) Students will apply practical knowledge and skills to develop lifelong behaviors for personal and community well-being.

1. Demonstrate high-quality hands-on CPR, how to operate an AED, and appropriate first aid.
2. Develop strategies for safety-related or emergency situations (for example, **vehicle safety**, recreation safety, firearm safety, seizure, stroke, cardiac event).
3. Practice responsible ways to communicate online, via text, or through other electronic means and how to respond to inappropriate contact or sexual advances online, via text, or through other electronic means.
4. Assess the harmful effects of pornography and recognize that recovery is possible.
5. Develop skills to determine the validity of current health resources, information and trends.
6. Research preventive measures for chronic and infectious health conditions, and the physical, mental and emotional, social and economic effects on self and society.
 - a. Research the efficacy of health screenings, immunizations, check-ups, and other preventive examinations that are necessary to maintain overall health and wellness.
 - b. Demonstrate effective communication about health concerns with healthcare providers and other trusted adults (for example, parent, guardian, relative, teacher, counselor, clergy).
7. Analyze and describe the relationships among healthy eating, physical activity, and chronic diseases (for example, heart disease, cancer, type-2 diabetes, hypertension, osteoporosis).

Utah State Board of Education. (2019) *Utah Core State Standards for Health Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.schools.utah.gov/>

Driver Education

An important milestone in the life of teens is to learn to drive and to be able to do so independently. However, research shows that teen drivers are at greater risk of being in a motor vehicle crash.

According to Utah Crash Summary Data:

1. “Teenage drivers (aged 15-19 years) are a special concern because of their high crash rates and lack of driving experience.”¹³
2. Approximately 21% of all crashes in Utah involved a teenage driver.¹³
3. On average, 58 people a year die in Utah from crashes involving a teenage driver.¹³

Utah requires all individuals 18 years old and younger to take a driver education course before being licensed in Utah.¹⁴ According to the Utah Teen Driving Task Force, the majority of Utah teen drivers (approximately 26,000 teens each year) complete their driver education requirement via a driver education program in a public high school.¹⁵



Critical Questions

1. Does your Driver Education program use the Utah State Office of Education Core Standards for Driver Education?
 - The Utah State Office of Education Core Standards for Driver Education can be found at: <https://www.schools.utah.gov/file/42952f2c-153f-4279-acd8-50747f5c963b>
2. What are the costs associated with Driver Education?
 - Do the costs prohibit students from accessing it?
3. Is Driver Education available at a convenient location and time for students?
4. Are there incentives to attend?
5. How is Driver Education promoted?

TOOL 1.4. CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SEAT BELT USE

It is important to engage students in conversations about seat belt use. Allow students to react to these positive norms.

- Most Uintah youth want people they care about to always wear a seat belt.⁷
- Most students wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else.⁷
- Most students reported that if they were in a vehicle with their friends and someone was not wearing a seat belt, they would likely ask them to wear a seat belt.⁷
- Most students in our county wear a seat belt.⁷
- 65% of Uintah students strongly agree or agree that if they are in a vehicle with their friends, and someone is not wearing a seat belt, they should ask them to wear a seat belt.⁷

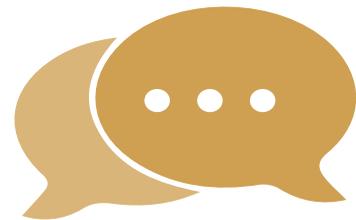
To help you navigate seat belt conversations with ease:

Explore their point of view. Engage in a dialogue to understand their perspective. Find out why they think it is important to buckle up and explore the times some teens are choosing not to wear a seat belt.

Create an environment that is collaborative by avoiding an “I’m the adult and I know everything” approach. Avoid sending the message to teens that you have all of the answers.¹²

Ask questions that don’t allow for yes or no responses. Open-ended questions create an environment of acceptance.¹² Approaching communication with an open attitude to learn something is important.

Communication signs of resistance may include: challenging your ideas, disagreeing with you, changing the conversation or ignoring you, making excuses, or interrupting.¹²



Weekly Student Reminder Messages

A strategy for keeping efforts regarding seat belt use at the forefront of conversation is to provide weekly student reminders. These can be broadcast over the school's intercom system or posted in highly visible locations.

1. Did you know, most students wear their seat belts?⁷ Whether you are driving or you are a passenger in a vehicle, please remember to buckle your seat belt.
2. Students, we care about you and your safety. Please remember to buckle your seat belt every time you are in a vehicle.
3. Safety is everyone's responsibility. 65% of Uintah students strongly agree or agree that if they are in a vehicle with their friends, and someone is not wearing a seat belt, they should ask them to wear a seat belt.⁷ Make sure everyone in the vehicle is wearing a seat belt and if someone isn't wearing a seat belt, ask them to buckle up!
4. Did you know that 85% of Uintah students strongly agree or agree they want people they care about to always wear a seat belt.⁷ Seat belts save lives.¹ Please wear your seat belt!
5. Driving a vehicle is a big responsibility! When you leave school today, don't forget to wear your seat belt and ask others to wear their seat belts too.



SECTION 2. PARENTS/COMMUNITY



Tools to Communicate with Parents and the Community

While it is important to implement strategies within the school, it is also important to communicate with parents and with the community. This section includes communication tools that school leaders can use to communicate their efforts to increase seat belt use.

Tool 2.1. Sample Parent Letter

Tool 2.2. Seat Belt Fact Sheet for Parents

Tool 2.3. Sample Statements for Community Conversations



TOOL 2.1. SAMPLE PARENT LETTER

Dear Parent,

Our school cares about the health and safety of your student. With this in mind, one of the important health and safety issues we are focused on this year is seat belt use and the importance of always wearing a seat belt when driving or riding in a vehicle. The research shows that motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for young people ages 5 to 24.¹ Wearing a seat belt is “one of the most effective measures a person can take to prevent injury and death in a crash.”²

At [Name of School], we are engaging in efforts to increase seat belt use, and would appreciate your help in furthering these efforts by setting family rules about seat belt use. Setting family rules about seat belt use is one way to ensure that your child understands your expectations about seat belt use when driving or riding in a vehicle. In a recent survey of our county adults it was revealed that 73% of adults, have a family rule about seat belt use.³ If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to develop family rules about seat belt use. Family rules could include:

- Always wear a seat belt when driving or riding in a vehicle.
- Ask others to always wear a seat belt.

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your child's educational development and to engage in efforts that help keep our youth safe.

Respectfully,

[Name Here]

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2. Dunn, L., Holliday, A., & Vegega, M. (2016, March). *Motor vehicle occupant protection facts – Children, youth, young adults (Fact book. Report No. DOT HS 812 251)*. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
3. Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2019, 2020). *Utah community survey of adults on seat belt use*. Montana State University. (N=3114, N=673)

TOOL 2.2. SEAT BELT FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS



www.togetherforlifeutah.org

LET'S BE TOGETHER FOR LIFE

The Concern

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for young people ages 5 to 24.²

According to the 2020 Utah Fatal Crash Summary:

- There were 276 traffic deaths in Utah and 65 of those deaths were children and teens aged 19 and younger.³
- Over the past 7 years, an estimated 411 people would have been saved had they been wearing a seat belt (2020).³

The Good News

Being properly restrained in a seat belt is “one of the most effective measures a person can take to prevent injury and death in a crash.”¹ Adults and students in Uintah County are already engaging in protective beliefs and behaviors.

Adults in Uintah County

- Most adults, 93%, in Uintah County agree they should always wear a seat belt.²
- Most adults, 68%, in Uintah County believe it is their responsibility to get others to wear a seat belt.²
- Most families, 73%, in Uintah County have a rule about always wearing a seat belt.²

Students in Uintah County

- Most students wear a seat belt.³
- Most students, 85%, strongly agree or agree they want people they care about to always wear a seat belt.³

Critical Steps to Increase Seat Belt Use

1. Whenever you are in a vehicle, make sure everyone is wearing a seat belt. Seat belts save lives. Speak up about this important issue.
2. Establish a family rule about always wearing a seat belt.

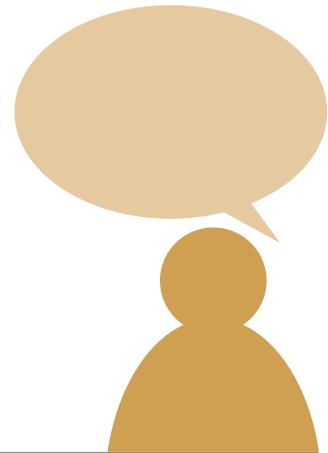
For more information about seat belt use in our county, visit togetherforlifeutah.org

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2. Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2019, 2020). *Utah community survey of adults on seat belt use*. Montana State University. (N=3114, N=673)
3. State of Utah Department of Human Services Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (2021). *Student Health and Risk Prevention, Prevention Needs Assessment Survey Results*. Retrieved from <http://dsamh.utah.gov>

TOOL 2.3. SAMPLE STATEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

These statements are provided to keep seat belt use at the forefront of awareness.



Call to Action about Seat Belt Use

As a school who cares about our youth, we need to speak up about the importance of always wearing a seat belt. Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for young people ages 5 to 24.² Not wearing a seat belt can result in serious and devastating consequences. The good news for our community is most teens in our county are wearing their seat belts when riding in a car driven by someone else.⁷ We need to make sure our young people know that we want them to buckle up. We need to provide a consistent message about the importance of always wearing a seat belt. I encourage you to join me in working together to increase seat belt use. It is our collaborative responsibility to keep our youth safe.

A Community Event

Our school is excited about the upcoming [event] on [date]. Events like these take an enormous amount of collaboration and effort, and require our school staff and parents to work together. Keeping our youth safe is everyone's responsibility. We can be proud that most students wear a seat belt. Unfortunately, for those who choose not to wear a seat belt, the consequences can be devastating. Please join me in encouraging our students to always wear a seat belt and to speak up and get others to wear their seat belts too.



Voicing Concern and Hope about Seat Belt Use

Adolescence is a time of learning to make independent choices. Many of the choices teens make will impact their future. As a community, we hope our youth are equipped to make positive choices including the important choice to always wear a seat belt. I am proud that in our county, most teens are choosing to wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else.⁷ Let's support our youth in continuing to make this important choice. Over the past 7 years, an estimated 411 people would have been saved had they been wearing a seat belt (2020). I encourage you to join me in working together to increase seat belt use.⁴

School Buses

We are often asked about school buses and why most school buses are not equipped with seat belts. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2017), school buses are designed to be safer than passenger vehicles in avoiding crashes and preventing injury.¹⁹ School buses are approximately seven times safer than passenger cars or light trucks.¹⁹

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