Herndon Police Department

Occupant Protection

Problem Identification

Occupant protection is an integral part of the department's traffic safety prevention and enforcement program. The department maintains data on occupant protection violations to include seat belt negligence and child safety seat violations and at the end of the "*Click it or Ticket"* campaigns in May and November, the department conducts seat belt surveys. In conjunction with all traffic stops and especially accident investigations, seat belt usage is reviewed along with all other violations. The statistics on seat belt and child safety seat violations, field surveys, along with injuries in accidents where occupant protection was a factor, are used to measure the occupant protection usage rate.

Field surveys offer a random statistical sampling of seat belt/child safety seat usage and appear to be a good indicator of overall usage. In 2015, officers saw an increase in the percentage of persons using their seat belts during and after the enforcement portion of the campaigns. Field surveys are important indicators and conducting them each year gleans valuable information for the department.

Seat belt and child safety seat summonses written in conjunction with other traffic infractions offer some insight into identifying the usage level outside of the field surveys. The department has found that seat belt and child safety seat violations comprise around 2% of all traffic tickets written.

Additionally, the department examines the relationship of safety equipment used in accidents where injuries were sustained in order to enhance identification of the occupant usage rate. Injuries in accidents where the following is a factor were considered for the usage rate: No Restraint Injuries, Child Restraint Injuries, and Booster Seat Injuries. This information further helps the department to get specific information each year to address occupant protection initiatives.

Temporal and other indicators are utilized primarily towards addressing the predominant offenses such as impaired driving or speeding violations, but can be given consideration in the universal approach to traffic safety and occupant protection.

Policies – See Policy Attachment

Planning

The Department's 2014 Traffic Analysis reviewed crash data and traffic enforcement activities for 2014, and outlined impaired driving and speeding enforcement. In addition, goals were established in the report for 2015 in hopes of decreasing crashes and injuries where alcohol or speed was a factor. Also, efforts to promote education were listed and plans were noted for enhancing enforcement through selective and routine enforcement. In addition, plans were established to continue participation in national campaigns which feature awareness of the need for diligence in seat belt usage. **This established our operational plan: to conduct targeted enforcement of occupant protection violations; enforce impaired driving and speeding violations; participate in enforcement campaigns to educate the public on the need for occupant protection; and monitor injuries associated with seat belt and child safety seat negligence.** These strategies align with Virginia's Strategic Traffic Plan.

Our annual Traffic Analysis and DMV grant data determined prominent locations and timeframes for impaired driving and speeding offenses, including those associated with accidents. Targeted enforcement of impaired driving and speeding violations additionally presented the opportunity to detect occupant protection violations. Planning for targeted enforcement of impaired, speeding, and occupant protection violations was based on temporal factors such as timeframe, seasons, seasonal events, and day of week, in order to better develop selective and routine enforcement strategies. Top crash locations were added to the selective enforcement schedule and officers monitored sites to reduce impaired driving and speeding. Occupant protection violations were also monitored. A selective enforcement schedule was distributed on a monthly basis to target enforcement efforts for specific violations. Selective traffic enforcement forms were completed for each assignment on a daily basis and submitted to the Traffic Section supervisor for compilation.

The department offers child safety seat installations and inspections throughout the year. These serve as an additional outreach to citizens on the importance of proper restraints.

The Herndon Police Department participates in the "*Click it or Ticket"* program during the national enforcement mobilizations in May and November. This national mobilization provides an annual educational campaign to specifically encourage the use of seat belts and the protection it affords in a crash. In conjunction with the end of each campaign, the department completes seat belt field surveys to validate actual usage. The campaigns are planned at different times to include night time seat belt enforcement.

In addition to the department's goals of decreasing overall crashes and crashes with injuries, the Department continues to address citizen traffic concerns and identify areas for selective enforcement, works to identify engineering remedies, and conducts and participates in specialized campaigns. Through its annual review of accident data the department monitors injuries to determine if seat belts are being used or if child safety seat violations occur. The department compiles information in its annual traffic analysis to continue to monitor injuries associated from failure to use occupant protection in addition to other traffic safety issues.

Efforts to curb accidents and reduce injuries through routine, selective, and specialized enforcement initiatives, to include educational awareness and traffic engineering strategies, supports the Virginia Strategic Traffic Plan to reduce deaths and severe injuries and increase safety belt usage.

Training

TRAINING ATTENDED BY MEMBERS OF THE HERNDON POLICE DEPARTMENT IN 2015

Type of Training	Activity	Participants
Child Safety Seat Inspector	Recertification	1 Officer
Motor Carrier Safety	Refresher Training	2 Officers
Police Motorcycle Operations	Refresher Training	5 Officers

PRIOR TRAINING USED BY MEMBERS OF THE HERNDON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Training is an important part of the department's ongoing mission to promote and increase safety on the roadways. Maintaining specialized certifications in crash investigations, utilizing speed detection devices, and other safety related training keeps the department prepared and proactive. The following table shows the current certifications held by department personnel and utilized throughout the year during enforcement efforts.

Current Certifications Utilized	Participants
Motor Carrier Safety	2 Officers
Child Safety Seat Inspectors	6 Officers
Motorcycle Operations	6 Officers
Advanced Crash Investigations, Level 1	12 Officers
Advanced Crash Investigations, Level 2	6 Officers
Advanced Crash Investigations, Level 3	5 Officers
Advanced Motorcycle Crash Investigations	4 Officers
RADAR and LIDAR	36 Officers

Every member of the Department attends academy level in-service retraining, roll call training, or departmental mandatory training. Roll call training is utilized to provide specific information on special enforcement initiatives and issues related to occupant protection, child safety seats, and pedestrian and bicycle safety. This training focuses on traffic laws concerning motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians alike. Every officer with traffic safety enforcement duties receives this training. Additionally, during 2015, members of the Herndon Police Department received specializied training in the area of motor carrier saftey, child safety seat inspection and installation, and crash investigation and reconstruction. Currently, the department has six certified child restaint inspectors. As part of the accreditation process, we document our officers' seat belt use.

Several officers have attended numerous academy level classes in traffic safety topics. These classes included occupant protection, motor carrier safety, traffic grant writing seminars, the law enforcement challenge preparation seminar, and police motorcycle operations to augment traffic enforcement efforts. As with many other area jurisdictions who have experienced a decrease in training budgets, we

have had to make the most of our training dollars. Despite budget cuts, the Herndon Police Department has kept traffic safety a primary focus of our training program.

In 2015, members of the Herndon Police Department Traffic Section continued to use training they received from the Department of Motor Vehicles - Virginia Highway Safety Office. The various courses on Crash Investigation and Reconstruction along with annual in-service training on Motor Carrier Safety helped officers investigate causes of crashes and conduct motor carrier safety inspections to make our roadways safe. Officers also received information on *Click it or Ticket* and *Smooth Operator* mobilizations and the importance of these campaigns through the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration.

Five officers attended various in-house training courses throughout the year in mapping intersections as part of the Crash Reconstruction Team. One member of the Herndon Police Department attended the Law Enforcement Challenge Preparation Class and two attended the DMV Grant Seminar. The information gained in the Law Enforcement Challenge Preparation Class assisted us in receiving a first place award for our category in 2014. The grant writing seminar provided us with valuable information that helped us receive $43,450 in DMV traffic safety grants that allowed us to increase enforcement efforts, purchase equipment, and offer more training.

Public Information and Education

Traffic Engineering

Significant contributions to traffic safety are fostered through the Department's active participation in the Town of Herndon's Traffic Engineering and Improvement Committee (TEIC). This committee is comprised of traffic engineers and Public Works staff, along with the Herndon Police Traffic Section officers. The committee meets bi-monthly to address citizen complaints, issues pertaining to potential or actual roadway engineering deficiencies, as well as future engineering, pedestrian safety, and congestion concerns. The police department plays a major role in the activities and resolutions of this committee.

The TEIC committee was instrumental in traffic and safety improvements made in the Town of Herndon in 2015. Traffic safety issues came to the attention of TEIC and the members explored solutions to these issues. The solutions were implemented and evaluated for their impact. The committee sought *best practices* solutions for traffic improvements to include adding signage, adding traffic signals, changing lane markings, or redesigning intersections. The use of speed buffering devices were reviewed along with speed studies at particular locations where officer or citizen concerns have been raised.

Special Programs & Community Policing

In 2015, the Department held a Youth Police Academy to remind juveniles about traffic safety, and discussed topics to include seat belt use, speed enforcement and DUI detection. Students of the Youth Academy received hands-on instruction with RADAR and LIDAR units, and were instructed on the importance of seat belt use, among other topics. Graduates of these academies learn about the importance of safety on the roadway and are encouraged to share their insight with others.

Members of the Traffic Section along with the Crime Prevention Officer of the Herndon Police Department speak to community and civic groups about traffic safety. Topics covered include bike safety, pedestrian safety, wearing a helmet, wearing seatbelts, and speed awareness. These presentations have been beneficial and the officers have been invited back several times. Flyers, brochures, and pamphlets with information on traffic safety are always available through kiosks at the Neighborhood Resource Center, the Community Center, the Herndon Branch of the Public Library, and the Herndon Police Department.

Press Releases and Events

At the onset of all traffic safety and educational initiatives, the Public Information Officer (PIO) of the Herndon Police Department issues a press release outlining the Department's intentions during the scheduled programs. These press releases to area news outlets include information on *Click It or Ticket* mobilizations and child safety seat checks. These press releases are listed on our department's webpage as well as our Twitter account.

November 6th 2015 Herndon Youth Police Academy

Enforcement Activity

Occupant protection is a fundamental component to reducing injuries in accidents. Special enforcement efforts in 2015 to increase awareness and prevent injuries as a result of seat belt and child safety seat usage have been a focus through routine enforcement, grant-funded enforcement, and specialized campaigns.

Regular Duty Enforcement

Officers in Patrol and the Traffic Section conduct enforcement operations as part of their daily responsibilities to detect seat belt and child safety seat violations as well as specialized enforcement aimed at impaired driving and speeding to reduce accidents and injuries. In 2015, the department issued a total of 28 summonses for seat belt violations and 34 summonses for child safety seat violations**.**

Grant Funded Enforcement

Our DMV grant targeting speeding violations is also used to enforce seat belt violations since Virginia does not have a primary seat belt law. **The department used 229 grant funded hours for speed and occupant protection violations.** During these targeted hours, 542 speeding summons and 14 seat belt/child restraint violations were issued.

Specialized Campaigns

The Herndon Police Department participated in the "*Click it or Ticket"* program during the National Enforcement Mobilization, May 18 through May 31, 2015 and the mini-mobilization from November 20 through November 26. The department also conducted seat belt surveys following each campaign.

Outcomes

The Herndon Police Department has made a concerted effort to enforce occupant protection violations, promote seatbelt usage and reduce injuries associated with utilizing restraints. These strategies are conducive to Virginia's Strategic Traffic Plan.

In addition to routine enforcement, the department conducted targeted impaired and speeding enforcement and monitored occupant protection violations. To schedule selective enforcement the Department researched accident and violation data and considered temporal factors such as timeframe, seasons, seasonal events and days of the week. The department identified the top crash locations and implemented selective enforcement to target specific violations to reduce impaired driving and speeding, along with occupant protection violations. The department distributed a monthly selective enforcement plan to target enforcement efforts for specific violations. Selective traffic enforcement forms were completed for each assignment on a daily basis and submitted to the Traffic Section supervisor for compilation. **The department wrote 62 seat belt and child safety seat violations in 2015 in comparison to 151 violations in 2014.**

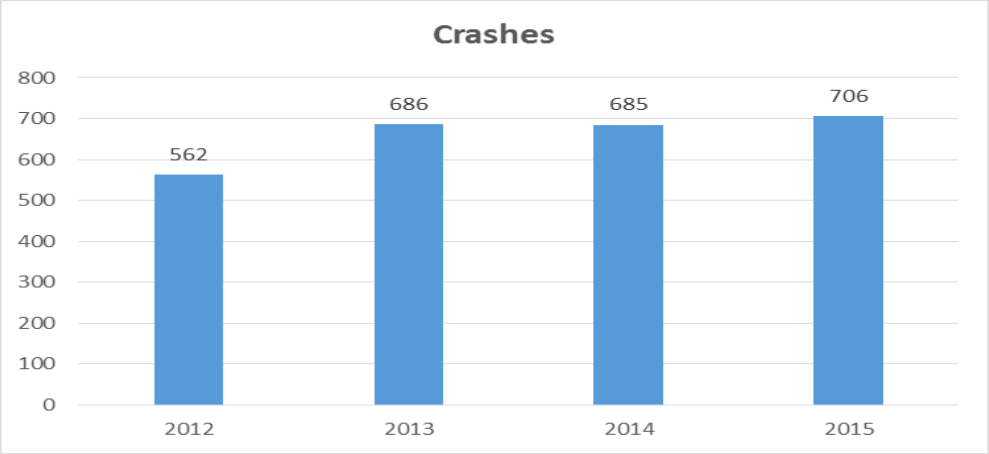
The Herndon Police Department participated in the "*Click it or Ticket"* program during the national enforcement mobilizations in May and November and conducted seat belt surveys to gauge actual usage. The campaigns were performed at different times to include night time seat belt enforcement. **The statistics from the field surveys compiled by the Herndon Police Department during the *Click It or Ticket* program indicated that seat belt usage increased from 91% to 94% from May 2015 to November 2015. The statistics for seat belt enforcement demonstrated a 3% increase in 2015.**

The department was very encouraged by the high number of motorists wearing seat belts in the Town. The increased enforcement as well as public education efforts demonstrated a direct impact on increased usage. The number of summonses issued also validates the Department's efforts in the area of occupant protection and a correlation could be made between the general increase in enforcement and the general compliance with seat belt laws.

The department examines the relationship of injuries sustained in accidents to occupant restraint safety equipment used. Injuries in accidents are almost always less serious and fewer in number when seat belts and properly installed child restraint seats and booster seats are used.

The overall effectiveness of the 2015 traffic safety programs for the Herndon Police Department was impressive, but continued diligence is needed. It is commendable to document a 94% seat belt usage rate based on field surveys, which is well above the state average usage rate. The continued diligence in child restraint enforcement and child safety seat inspections demonstrates our commitment. It is also very gratifying to see the reduction of injuries where seat belt usage was a factor.

The department's statistics on occupant protection are promising and provide a template to direct our efforts in 2016. These efforts will include a continued focus on outreach and awareness on occupant protection to the community, and enforcement coupled with prevention efforts should reduce injuries in accidents.



Awards

Law Enforcement Challenge Award

At the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police Conference on September 01, 2015, the Herndon Police Department received the first place award in the 2014 Law Enforcement Challenge for Municipal Police Departments with 55-75 members.

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Law Enforcement Challenge Award
September 01, 2015