TOGETHER FOR SAFER ROADS

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Seat Belt Safety Standard Operating Procedures

How to create and maintain a culture of safety by promoting seat belt safety procedures

First Edition, February 2024

Value Every Life, Secure Every Journey, Buckle Up Every Time

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Acknowledgments

Together for Safer Roads would like to thank the following organizations for their contributions to this handbook. Without their assistance, this guide would not have been possible:

- Anheuser-Busch InBev
- Republic Services
- Autoliv
- NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services-Fleet Management
- NYC Department of Environmental Protection-Fleet Services
- Interstate Waste Services
- PepsiCo
- UPS
- Cities Reimagined

Disclaimers

This document is not an official guide by a government entity, but rather is guidance that presents key aspects of safety to assist employees, contractors, and individuals operating company vehicles, or engaging in work-related driving activities,with navigating and/or creating new processes for increasing seat belt utilization. It aims to establish a comprehensive framework for promoting seat belt safety within an organization. It is designed to address common challenges and best practices identified during discussions with a diverse set of stakeholders.

This handbook provides a framework for organizations to develop their own seatbelt safety procedures based on insights and feedback from fleet managers, drivers, public and private sector fleet leaders, and policymakers. It emphasizes the importance of safety, technology integration, training, and continuous improvement to ensure seat belt compliance and to save lives.

Together for Safer Roads is solely responsible for the content of this report. TSR members, including the organizations that provided general support for our work, were not involved in the drafting of the report and bear no responsibility for the content.

Foreword

Together for Safer Roads and our many partners are pleased to present this report on seat belts and how fleets can best create cultures and systems to increase their daily usage. The end result, as one might imagine, contains a comprehensive set of recommendations that are applicable for fleets large and small, public and private. Furthermore, what we believe is a critical part of any research is that the report is directly informed by the end-user: the drivers using seat belts each and everyday.

> **"The only thing about this seat belt that I don't love is that you can't adjust the height. Some guys are bigger and need an extender- and that works fine but if you're shorter than me sometimes that doesn't work well."**
> - A waste service driver interviewed for the project

By allowing for the input and experience of drivers to inform decision making in fleets, we can create environments that are best suited to enhance the adoption of effective, long-term seat belt safety practices.

Moving beyond the specific content, however, **this report ultimately represents a commitment to the ethos that every life is valuable, and that every journey, no matter how short, deserves the safeguard of a securely fastened seat belt.**

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About

Together for Safer Roads

Together for Safer Roads is a global NGO working to bring together purpose-driven companies, government, and community stakeholders, who actively work together to create safer roads and form partnerships to achieve Vision Zero—the elimination of all traffic fatalities and severe injuries. Together for Safer Roads leverages the collective insights of public and private sector member companies' to advance best practices for companies and their fleets. We address strategic road safety challenges in select locations by working with local government and stakeholders, and we advance innovative solutions to accelerate the growth and social impact of road safety tech.

Cities Reimagined

Cities Reimagined is a civic design firm that uses a combination of data and deep end-user engagement to help leaders diagnose and solve urban problems. Its team of designers and data analysts build sustainable program models that address specific societal issues, and co-create all programs alongside the people they are intended to serve. This ensures that what is built works for the target population.

Introduction

In the world of fleet and vehicle management, the safety of drivers, passengers, and the larger community is the top priority. Since 1975 until 2017, seat belts have saved an estimated 400k+ lives. However, The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration reports that an estimated 14% of commercial motor vehicle drivers still don't wear seat belts in 2023.[1] The focus of these Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) is seat belts — a fundamental and critical aspect of an overall road safety system. Looking back into the past twenty years or so, the research did not yield a document exclusively focused on seat belt usage specifically within fleet management. As road conditions, vehicle technology, and driver behaviors evolve, so too must our strategies for ensuring that everyone buckles up, every time. This SOP is not just a compilation of guidelines; it is a reflection of a dedication to saving lives and preventing injuries. Each chapter within this document draws from industry best practices, extensive field research, and the collaborative input of stakeholders.

This SOP contains six chapters:

- **Training for Seat Belt Compliance**: Building a foundation of knowledge and cultivating a culture of safety through comprehensive training initiatives.

- **Seat Belt Software and Hardware Selection**: Adopting the most reliable and effective technological solutions to bolster seat belt compliance and monitoring.

- **Purchasing and Evaluating Vehicle Seat Belt Safety Systems**: Ensuring that the procurement of vehicles and their safety equipment is guided by informed, safety-focused decisions. This involves establishing clear criteria for seat belt safety features and assessing the safety records and seat belt technology of potential vehicle models to maintain compliance with seat belt safety regulations.

- **Seat Belt Utilization Enforcement**: Creating mechanisms for compliance, while ensuring accountability and timely corrective actions.

- **Communication for Seat Belt Safety Awareness**: Establishing clear channels and protocols for disseminating safety information, collecting feedback, and fostering dialogue.

- **Documentation of Seat Belt Safety Compliance**: Ensuring meticulous record-keeping, accessibility, and regular updates to all seat belt safety-related documents.

Within each chapter, practices are categorized as currently existing practices, industry best practices, and easy to implement takeaways, providing fleet leaders a range of tools to implement in their own management practices. Currently existing practices were sourced from Together for Safer Road member fleet drivers during an October 2023 workshop and subsequent field interviews. Industry best practices were sourced from industry leaders, independent research, and existing standards and policies. "Easy to Implement Takeaways" are a blend of best practices and user-informed strategies that are simple and easy to implement and will yield strong seat belt safety outcomes.

This document provides a framework for organizations to develop seatbelt safety procedures based on insights and feedback from fleet managers, drivers, public and private sector fleet leaders, and policymakers. It emphasizes the importance of safety, technology integration, training, and continuous improvement to ensure seat belt compliance and to save lives. This document makes a substantial

contribution towards improving seatbelt safety by offering the only current, comprehensive guide on practices for improving seat belt usage and safety within public and private fleets. Through research that combines end-user insights with evidence based recommendations and best practices, the following set of operating procedures offer feasible and high impact solutions proven to improve seat belt safety outcomes.

What follows is a comprehensive collection of standard operating procedures for organizations to implement in order to increase seatbelt utilization. The document begins by summarizing the goals of standard operating procedures for increasing seat belt utilization. Subsequent chapters outline specific tactics to implement according to six operational categories related to seatbelt usage– training, purchasing, hardware and software, usage, communication, and documentation. This document improves road safety by specifying best practices that can be adopted to increase seat belt usage and compliance across organizational contexts.

Seat Belt Safety Goals

When integrating seat belt safety goals into SOPs, it's vital to consider both organizational and operational factors, alongside change management strategies. At the organizational level, this practice could involve cultivating a strong safety culture. Operationally, it's important to focus on procedures such as regular vehicle maintenance and incorporating seat belt usage into driver performance evaluations. Change management should encompass effective communication of safety initiatives and establishing a feedback loop to monitor effectiveness and facilitate continuous improvement. This holistic approach ensures that seat belt safety is deeply integrated into the fabric of the organization's operations and culture.

A few of the SOP goal examples for Seat Belt Safety are as follows:

- Consider adopting a seat belt safety approach as a distinct, but also a specific element of, a larger, overarching, holistic safety culture..

- Utilize data analytics and telematics in a continuous cycle to measure and enhance seat belt compliance with a systematic approach that includes not only the drivers and users, but also the system designers, and policy makers. This allows for real-time feedback and more targeted interventions when non-compliance patterns emerge.

- Recognize and reward drivers who consistently exhibit safe behaviors, creating a more proactive safety culture. Rather than only focusing on the punitive side of non-compliance, employ positive reinforcement techniques and reward collective efforts while recognizing department and organizational level areas for improvement.

- Integrate ongoing education and training programs that are part of a comprehensive safety strategy, emphasizing the rationale behind seat belt use and showcasing real-world consequences of non-compliance. Utilize a blend of e-learning modules, face-to-face training, and hands-on simulations.

- Engage the entire organization, not just drivers, in seat belt safety initiatives. By promoting the idea that road safety is a shared responsibility, you can help foster a collective safety mindset. Utilize social media to reach a younger audience of stakeholders who can reinforce the importance of seatbelt safety within their own family unit.

Guidelines for Setting Safety Goals

Setting clear and measurable goals around seatbelt safety is imperative for monitoring and evaluating performance. As fleets consider these seat belt SOPs and how they might be implemented within their own fleets, setting goals around implementation can provide:

- **Direction and Purpose**: Goals provide a sense of direction and purpose. They give a reason to strive for something, motivating actions that need to be taken that move toward a desired outcome.

- **Focus and Clarity**: Setting clear and specific goals helps prioritize efforts and focus on what truly matters. It reduces distractions and keeps teams on track.

- **Method for Measuring Progress**: Goals provide a yardstick for measuring progress. They help you assess how far you've come and what steps are needed to reach your target. Goals enable you to define what success means to you. You can set your own benchmarks for success and work toward achieving them.

- **Motivation**: Having well-defined goals can be a powerful source of motivation. With a goal in mind, it's easier to stay committed and overcome obstacles.

- **Anchored Decision Making**: Goals guide decision-making process. They help evaluate whether a particular choice or action aligns with stated objectives.

- **Positive Reinforcement**: Achieving goals can boost confidence and morale. Each successful goal attainment serves as a reinforcement that teams and organizations are capable of achieving what they set out to do.

- **Long-term Vision**: Goals are essential for long-term planning. They articulate and envision the desired future state and steps needed to make that vision a reality.

- **Adaptation and Flexibility**: While goals provide direction, they can also be adjusted as circumstances change. This flexibility allows for adaptation to new information or changing priorities.

- **Communication that Resonates**: Clear goals facilitate communication within a team or organization. They ensure that everyone is working toward a common objective.

The appendix of this report includes additional resources, including a guide to setting S.M.A.R.T. goals.

Measuring the Impact of Seat Belt Safety Practices: Why Measurement Matters

Measurement and evaluation (M&E) plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of programs, projects, and initiatives. As fleets implement portions of this SOP guide, measurement and evaluation of implementation and practices can provide:

- **Accountability**: M&E provides a mechanism for organizations and individuals to be held accountable for the outcomes and impacts of their actions. It helps stakeholders understand who is responsible for what and whether they are delivering on their commitments.

- **Performance Improvement**: Regular monitoring allows for the identification of issues and challenges in real time. This information can be used to make mid-course corrections, adjust strategies, and improve the overall performance of a project or program.

- **Resource Allocation**: By evaluating the effectiveness of different components or activities within a project, M&E can guide resource allocation decisions. It helps organizations prioritize investments and allocate resources where they are most needed and likely to have the greatest impact.

- **Learning and Adaptation**: M&E promotes a culture of learning within organizations. It enables them to learn from both successes and failures, adapt to changing circumstances, and apply lessons learned to future endeavors.

- **Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** M&E provides data and evidence that can inform decision-making. This evidence-based approach ensures that decisions are grounded in facts and analysis rather than assumptions or intuition.

- **Impact Assessment**: M&E helps assess the long-term impact of projects and programs. It allows organizations to determine whether they are achieving their intended outcomes and what affects their work is having on the broader community or environment.

- **Transparency**: Transparency is a key element of good governance. M&E practices demonstrate transparency by making project or program information, progress, and results available to stakeholders, including funders, beneficiaries, and the public.

- **Risk Management**: Measurement can help identify potential risks and challenges early, allowing organizations to take proactive measures to mitigate or address these issues before they become major problems.

- **Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness**: By tracking resources and expenditures, M&E helps organizations identify areas where they can streamline processes, reduce waste, and improve cost-effectiveness.

- **Stakeholder Engagement**: M&E often involves engaging stakeholders and beneficiaries in the assessment process, which can lead to a better understanding of their needs and preferences, as well as increased community involvement and support.

Measurement and evaluation are important tools for ensuring that efforts are on track, accountable, and delivering the intended results. They contribute to informed decision-making, learning, and continuous improvement, ultimately increasing the likelihood of success for projects, programs, and organizations.

Top-Line Recommendations for Effective Measuring of Seat Belt Safety Compliance

Seat belt safety demands both attention and action. The following impact measurement strategies come directly from a series of in-depth interviews and interactive workshops, engaging experts and practitioners who are at the forefront of fleet operations. These discussions have illuminated the impact of seat belt usage in reducing injuries and saving lives and highlighted a variety of measures and strategies that can significantly enhance seat belt compliance. Each strategy is backed by industry best practice, making it credible and practical.

- Transition from periodic tracking to real-time monitoring of seat belt usage. Some telematics systems can now provide instantaneous data on seat belt compliance across a fleet.

- Go beyond basic alerts by using advanced systems that offer analytics on seat belt usage patterns. This will help identify recurrent non-compliance issues, or specific time frames/zones where violations are more frequent.

- In addition to surveys, introduce regular face-to-face feedback sessions or focus groups. This encourages more detailed discussions and offers a clearer understanding of drivers' attitudes towards seat belt safety protocols and can unlock key driver insights..

- Instead of only tracking seat belt non-compliance incidents, conduct a thorough analysis to identify the root causes behind these occurrences. Root cause analysis (RCA) is the process of discovering the root causes of problems in order to identify appropriate solutions. Understanding why individuals fail to wear seat belts can inform more effective preventive strategies, directly impacting seat belt safety measures. This approach not only helps in tracking compliance rates, but also in developing targeted interventions to increase seat belt usage, thereby enhancing overall fleet safety.

- Tie safety awards and incentives to quantifiable performance metrics, ensuring that recognition is objective and transparent. For instance, drivers with X days of continuous seat belt compliance can be acknowledged or rewarded.

- Ensure the budget for the safety initiative is flexible. As technology evolves or new safety challenges arise, the ability to redirect funds to ensure financial resources to support new seat belt training, analysis, hardware, and software.[2]

Chapter 1
Training for Seat Belt Compliance

Within this chapter, we delineate the training methods and guidelines directed specifically towards seat belt safety, infusing them with best practices, current methodologies, and clearly defined roles for each stakeholder.

Currently Existing Practices for Training

For this chapter and subsequent chapters, current practices have been identified via interviews with Together for Safer Roads members, drivers, and fleet managers. Interviews were coded to identify trends in current practices across sectors and industries as related to each of our six categories of operating procedures.

- **Documentation**: Fleet management manuals and safety ground rules are available in printed form and are handed out to personnel.

- **Verbal Guidance**: In addition to the handouts, verbal guidance and feedback are provided to drivers regarding the importance and proper use of seat belts.

- **Yearly Audits**: Audits related to seat belt usage are conducted annually to assess compliance.

Industry Best Practices for Training

- **Comprehensive Education & Emphasis on Consequences**: Educate all stakeholders, including drivers and passengers, continuously about the importance of seat belts. This education should extend beyond just the mechanics of buckling up to include the dire consequences of neglecting to do so. An example demonstrating the impact of such training could be seen as part of NHTSA's effort to test whether a special diversion program, a brief intervention class taught by highly respected trauma nurses in a hospital setting, coupled with dismissal of a belt citation would convince hard to reach drivers to wear their seat belts. The evaluation showed that the Trauma Nurses Talk Tough (TNTT) seat belt course had a notable impact on class attendees' opinions about seat belt use, enforcement of the seat belt law, and knowledge of basic highway safety information. You can learn more about the class and its impact analysis here. This experiment utilizes real-life scenario simulations by employing simulators , story telling, and role-plays to simulate actual driving experiences. The nurses shared real life stories about real people who sustained preventable injuries because they were not wearing seat belts. They used highly graphic visuals to demonstrate the negative physical, medical, rehabilitation, emotional, legal, and financial consequences of not wearing seat belts from their medical point-of-view.

  This experiment also incorporated feedback and evaluation in the process. Routine evaluations and feedback mechanisms after each training should punctuate the training processes, offering dual benefits of trainer assessment and learner introspection.

- **Case Study 1**: For fleets, Travelers Insurance provides a comprehensive seat belt safety program tailored to commercial drivers. Key elements include:

  - **Emphasizing Safety**: Stressing the importance of seat belt usage to reduce the risk of injury or death in a crash by 50%. It also highlights the high cost of motor vehicle-related workplace injuries

  - **Protection for Passengers and Drivers**: Emphasizing the benefits of wearing seat belts, such as protection from crash forces and preventing ejection from the vehicle

  - **Creating a Successful Seat Belt Program**: Recommendations from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration include assigning a high-level manager to enforce a comprehensive safety policy, ensuring compliance through monitoring and training, and getting all employees, including management, to pledge to use seat belts.[3]

  This approach is designed to promote seat belt safety specifically within fleet operations, addressing the unique challenges and responsibilities of commercial vehicle drivers.

- **Case Study 2**: Another example primarily focused on non-commercial vehicles comes from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) approach to seat belt safety education. Though primarily focused on non-commercial, non-fleet drivers, it offers valuable insights and strategies that can be extrapolated and adapted for fleet drivers:

  - **Comprehensive Education for Parents and Caregivers**: NHTSA addresses common reasons why parents might neglect seat belt safety and offers strategies to overcome these challenges. Emphasizing the consequences of not wearing a seat belt and offering regular, interactive training sessions can increase awareness and compliance for fleet drivers as well.

  - **Targeted Focus on High-Risk Groups**: Just as the NHTSA highlights the risks for teenagers, fleet organizations can identify high-risk groups within their driver pool. This could include younger drivers, those with a history of safety violations, or those driving in more challenging conditions. Continuous reminders and targeted education about the importance of seat belt usage, as well as adherence to safety laws, can be effective.

  - **Back Seat Safety**: The NHTSA's emphasis on back seat safety is also crucial for fleet vehicles, especially those used for passenger transport or ride-sharing services. Ensuring that all passengers, not just the driver, are educated about and adhere to seat belt safety can significantly reduce the risk of injuries in the event of a crash.

  - **Public Service Campaigns**: NHTSA actively works to eliminate risky behaviors on the road through campaigns such as "Buckle Up America," "Never Give Up Until They Buckle Up," and "Click It or Ticket." These initiatives aim to educate Americans about seat belt safety and are supported by law enforcement across the country.[4]

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[3] Creating a Formal Fleet Seat Belt Policy | Travelers Insurance] (https://www.travelers.com/resources/business-topics/transportation/driver-fleet-safety/creating-a-formal-fleet-seat-belt-policy).
[4] Seat Belt Safety: Buckle Up America | NHTSA] (https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts).

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This multifaceted approach from the NHTSA demonstrates how comprehensive education about seat belt safety, coupled with an emphasis on the dire consequences of neglecting to buckle up, can effectively increase awareness and compliance. By adapting these strategies to the specific needs and contexts of fleet drivers, organizations can enhance their seat belt safety education and overall road safety. The key is to create a culture where safety is valued and prioritized at every level, from management to individual drivers.

- **Specialized Young Driver Programs**: Recognizing the heightened risks associated with younger drivers, dedicated training programs should target this demographic, emphasizing the importance of seat belt safety.

  - **NASCAR Partnership with the Governor's Highway Safety Association**: Together for Safer Roads and the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services will be participating in May 2024 in the ongoing partnership with NASCAR driver Ross Chastain and the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) Protect Your Melon initiative. GTSC and Chastain visit high schools throughout New York state each year to demonstrate the importance of seat belt safety to young people who are often the least likely to properly use and wear seat belts.

  - **CDLJobs.com's Seat Belt Safety**: This article emphasizes the rising use of seat belts and their life-saving impact, particularly for truck drivers. It advocates for setting a good example as a driver, noting the influence this can have on less experienced drivers and young adults. The article highlights the stark difference in fatality and injury risk between those who wear seat belts and those who do not, and how enforcement programs have significantly increased seat belt use.[5]

- **Modular and Comprehensive Curriculum Design**: Training curriculums should be modular, commencing with fundamental concepts and progressively moving towards advanced topics, ensuring a systematic understanding. Within the industry there are several examples and best practices for modular and comprehensive seat belt safety training, particularly focused on fleet and commercial drivers:

  - **FMCSA's Manual on Increasing Safety Belt Use**: This manual provides a structured approach to seat belt safety training. It includes a corporate safety belt statement and pledge, emphasizing the importance of safety belt use and the consequences of not wearing them. The training covers the effectiveness of safety belts, responsibilities of drivers and management, and the enforcement of safety belt use.[6]

  - **Chevin Fleet Solutions' Fleet Driver Safety Training**: Chevin's approach starts with identifying training needs based on data such as incidents, telematics systems, and collision reports. It then moves to choosing effective training methods, including group sessions, workshops, and online e-learning solutions. This modular approach allows for targeting specific needs, such as remedial training after an incident or regulatory requirements.[7]

These examples showcase how modular training programs can start with basic safety principles and gradually incorporate more detailed, specific information, ensuring comprehensive

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[5] Buckle Up, Truckers: Seat Belts Save Lives. https://www.cdljobs.com/news-notes/news/seat-belt-safety-practical-reasons-for-truckers-to-buckle-up.

[6] Increasing Safety Belt Use in Your Company - Manual | FMCSA. https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety/safety-belt/increasing-safety-belt-use-your-company-manual.

[7] Fleet Driver Safety Training | Chevin Fleet Solutions. https://www.chevinfleet.com/en-us/learning-zone/fleet-driver-safety-training/.

understanding and adherence to seat belt safety practices.

- **Adopt Blended Learning Approaches**: Blend traditional face-to-face sessions, hands-on activities, and digital e-learning modules for a diverse learning experience that accommodates different learning styles.

- **Employ Engaging Awareness Campaigns**: Supplement training sessions with captivating campaigns using storytelling, testimonials, and evocative visuals. These emotionally resonant campaigns can be instrumental in altering behaviors.[8]

- **Tech Training**: As new technologies are integrated, training should be provided to ensure fleet drivers understand and adapt to increase seat belt usage. Integrating new technologies and training programs to increase seat belt usage among fleet drivers involves a multi-faceted approach, as evidenced by several training initiatives and techniques:

  - **NTSI Fleet Defensive Driving and Driver Safety Training**: The National Traffic Safety Institute (NTSI) offers various fleet driver and driver safety training courses. These courses are available on site with certified instructors, online, and as a Train-the-Trainer program. Their focus is on empowering fleet drivers to make safe and educated decisions, emphasizing personal responsibility and positive driving attitudes. Their SAFER Driver Challenge™ Fleet Training Program is a comprehensive commercial driving program available online, in classrooms, and as a train-the-trainer program, which can include in-vehicle training.

  - **Utilizing Seat Belt Data in Fleet Reports**: Monitoring and including seat belt usage data in fleet reports can instill accountability and increase seat belt usage. By making seat belt usage visible and known, drivers begin to develop safer driving habits. Automation of performance and analysis of safety training materials using seat belt data can enhance the efficiency of such training programs. Fleet managers can encourage efficient usage of seat belts by constructing and ensuring compliance with seat belt safety precautions, tracking drivers' behaviors, and prioritizing overall safety.

- **Back to Basics**: Surprisingly, many drivers may not know the proper "how" of using a seat belt. Training sessions simulating a first-time experience should be incorporated. For example, there are the Quick Cards covering basic principles of safe driving created by OSHA.[9] Something similar could be created for seat belt safety.

- **Managerial Focus**: Managers responsible for fleet management must undergo training to ensure they understand the workings and safety protocols of the fleets they manage. There are several fleet management certifications, such as the CAFM (Certified Automotive Fleet Manager), CAFS (Certified Automotive Fleet Specialist), NATMI Certification, and ARN Fleet Certification Program. These programs are highly valued in the industry and are a testament to the growing demand for educated and certified fleet managers.

  Additional training and certification programs that could help ensure that fleet managers are well-versed in the latest industry practices, technologies, and safety protocols are:

  - **CAFM Self-Study Program**: The Certified Automotive Fleet Manager (CAFM) program is a self-study course open to individuals with at least one year of experience in any fleet-related position. It covers all aspects of fleet management and is aimed at both new and experienced fleet managers looking to enhance their skills and knowledge.

- ○ **NAFA Online Learning and Certification Courses**: The NAFA Fleet Management Association offers various online training and certification opportunities. These courses are comprehensive and cover numerous aspects of fleet management, from operational efficiencies to safety protocols.

  Participating in these trainings can allow for enhancing the overall efficiency and safety of fleet operations.

- **Passenger Training**: Passengers should also receive safety training, similar to drivers, promoting a mindset where passengers act as co-pilots, equally responsible for safety.

Easy to Implement Takeaways

The first rule to develop good training is to prioritize seat belt education in drivers' education process within an organization. Driver's education courses should underscore seat belt usage, instilling its importance from the onset of a driver's journey. It is also important to tailor and customize the training depending on the demographic and expertise level of the driver population to ensure maximum retention and application. An example of an overall seat belt safety training process could be similar to below and entail ten steps.

1. Audience Analysis Age, gender, experience, language, learning preference	**2. Content Development** Fundamentals for all, customized modules, cultural awareness	**3. Interactive Learning Techniques** Simulations, VR, role playing, group discussions
4. Hands-On Training In-car demonstrations, emergency drills	**5. Assessment and Feedback** Quizzes, tests, feedback mechanisms	**6. Reinforcement Strategies** Reminders, posters, refresher courses
7. Technology Integration E-learning, mobile apps	**8. Tracking and Evaluation** Follow-up surveys, data analysis	**9. Continuous Improvement** Update materials, stakeholder involvement
10. Certification and Incentives Certification, rewards system		

Seat Belt Safety Training General Process

While the content specifically tailored for seat belt safety is not abundant, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) offers a toolkit including a variety of materials designed to promote Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) seat belt safety:

- **Earned Media Toolkit**: Contains campaign talking points, a press release, and a template pitch email.

- **Social Media Playbook**: Offers a range of social media messages, graphics, and tips.

- **Social Media Graphics**: Graphics to remind CMV drivers about the importance of buckling up while driving.

- **Visor Card**: A tool for CMV drivers to keep seat belt safety top of mind while driving.

- **One-Pager**: Provides ideas on spreading the message of seat belt safety.

- **Video Public Service Announcements**: Short videos with clear messages about always buckling up, suitable for use on various platforms.[10]

This example demonstrates how seat belt safety training can be tailored to specific audiences, in this case, CMV drivers, using a variety of media and communication strategies.

Responsibilities

- **Transportation Coordinators**: Transportation coordinators are the individuals who hold primary responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of seat belt safety training.

- **Operational Personnel**: Individuals at or above the operational level should ensure that safety guidelines are followed and enforced.

- **Local Safety Managers**: Safety managers at the local level play a crucial role in adapting global guidelines to local conditions and ensuring compliance.

Chapter 2
Seat Belt Software and Hardware Selection

This chapter focuses on the selection and implementation of seat belt hardware and software, combining industry best practices, organizational experiences, and expert insights. The aim is to ensure that chosen technologies effectively promote and monitor seat belt safety compliance while promoting a bigger solution for a streamlined approach when it comes to technology and safety of fleet drivers.

Current Existing Practices for Hardware & Software Selection

There are limited practices currently existing within organizations to determine what technology needs to be selected and utilized to ensure compliance with seat belt safety. Most of these practices are geared toward pilot testing for hardware, rather than the software.

- **Pilot Testing for hardware**: Currently, small pilot tests are launched to evaluate seat belt hardware, but no such pilots are in place for software.[11] To improve current practice, and to assess the effectiveness of seatbelt safety systems, pilots should be expanded to include evaluations of software systems used to monitor and enforce seat belt usage.

Industry Best Practices for Hardware & Software Selection

As part of a larger goal for the fleet management industry to increasingly incorporate new technology, organizations must continue to update their operational practices. This shift is not just about innovation; it's crucial for staying competitive and unlocking growth potential. The technologies listed below, supported by rigorous testing and real-world feedback, are reshaping fleet operations. They enhance efficiency and safety, providing a competitive edge in a data-driven landscape.

- **Seat Belt Use Detection Systems**: Modern vehicles often come with seat belt detection systems. Ideally, these systems could integrate with vehicle start mechanisms, preventing operation unless seat belts are fastened. (e.g.[12] *Volvo Trucks has implemented advanced seat belt detection systems in their vehicles, alerting drivers when seat belts are not fastened*.)

- **Audible and Visual Reminders**: Enhanced reminders can be designed to interact seamlessly with other systems, offering not just in-vehicle alerts but also real-time feedback to fleet managers on compliance (*e.g. Ford's MyKey technology allows fleet managers to program audible and visual seat belt reminders into their vehicles, enhancing safety compliance*.) Real-time feedback systems can also influence driving behavior more effectively. They can provide both immediate corrective suggestions and long-term behavior analysis, feeding into the overall safety strategy of the fleet (*e.g. Azuga Fleet utilizes telematics data to provide real-time feedback to drivers on their behavior, including seat belt usage*.)

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[11] This statement is based on comments from workshop participants in the "Seat Belt Safety SOP development Workshop", facilitated October 6, 2023.

[12] These examples demonstrate how various technologies are being utilized in the context of fleet safety and management.

- **Telematics Integration**: Advanced telematics systems are pivotal in recording and reporting seat belt usage. As part of a holistic approach, this data can be utilized for dynamic safety audits and predictive maintenance, providing current status of the fleet (*e.g. Samsara, Geotab and others offers advanced telematics solutions that can track seat belt usage among other vehicle data, providing comprehensive insights for fleet managers.*)

- **In-cab Cameras**: These devices can provide valuable insights into driver behavior, offering an objective view in incidents and aiding in behavioral analysis (*e.g. companies like Samsara Lytx or VisionTrack all provide different types of in-cab cameras with machine vision and artificial intelligence capabilities to monitor driver behavior, including seat belt usage.*)

- **Software Applications and Mobile Apps**: These tools can streamline compliance and record keeping. In a digitally updated fleet, they can serve as interfaces for real-time data input and access, enhancing decision-making (*e.g. Samsara's fleet management platform includes mobile apps that can assist with compliance documentation and safety monitoring.*)

- **Cloud Computing and Software Solutions**: Cloud-based software is essential for centralized data management. In the context of digitization, such platforms become crucial for storing, analyzing, and rendering the vast data streams related to fleet operations (*e.g. Trimble's fleet management solutions use cloud computing to offer real-time data access and analytics for fleet operations.*)

- **Advanced Seat Belt Technologies**: In a fleet operating in areas with poor road conditions or frequent potholes, drivers often complain about the discomfort caused by seat belts tightening unexpectedly when the vehicle goes over a bump. This discomfort can lead some drivers to avoid wearing seat belts, significantly increasing their risk in the event of a crash. To address this, a fleet operator may decide to integrate seat belts equipped with pretensioners into their vehicles. Pretensioners are advanced seat belt systems that automatically adjust the slack in a seat belt to provide both safety and comfort. In this scenario, when the vehicle goes over a pothole, the pretensioner system senses the abrupt movement and adjusts the seat belt tension accordingly, preventing the jarring cinch that drivers find uncomfortable. This technology ensures that the seat belt remains comfortably yet securely fastened around the driver, reducing the likelihood of the driver not wearing the seat belt due to discomfort. Innovations like pretensioners and inflatable seat belts can be integrated into the technology system of fleets, providing valuable insights for safety enhancements and predictive crash modeling.

By leveraging these technologies, fleets can ensure that every aspect of operation and safety is monitored, analyzed, and optimized in a virtual environment that mirrors their real-world operations. This approach not only upholds the highest safety standards but also solidifies a company's commitment to innovation and the well-being of its employees and the public.

Easy to Implement Takeaways

- **Competitor Analysis**: Periodic benchmarking against leading software providers ensures that the organization remains at the forefront of technological advancements.

- **External Advocacy**: Pressuring government entities to mandate the adoption of advanced seat belt safety technologies for both software and hardware can facilitate wider adoption and set industry standards.

- **Internal Feedback Mechanisms**: Conducting surveys within organizations can gather feedback

on the pros and cons of the last three to five fleets used, both at zone and global levels. This feedback could provide insight in the patterns that are happening, their potential magnitude and be invaluable for informed decision-making.

- **Record Keeping**: Member organization fleets currently utilize industry-recognized software platforms for seat belt compliance and safety record-keeping, setting a benchmark in the field. All organizations would benefit from the adoption of these software systems.

Responsibilities

Fleets benefit from building and maintaining robust partnerships with service providers and suppliers who consistently put safety and compliance at the forefront of their operations. By aligning with vetted vendors, organizations can perform timely and meticulous maintenance, thorough repairs, and rigorous inspections, all carried out by certified professionals. Establishing such strategic partnerships not only helps in upholding the highest safety standards, but also reinforces a company's commitment to the well-being of its employees and the general public.

- **External Advocacy**: Industry-based companies and organizations such as TSR should take the lead in advocating for advanced safety technologies.

- **Internal Champions**: Individuals within organizations who have hands-on experience ("who walked the walk") should have a voice in decision-making processes. Their expertise will ensure that chosen solutions are practical and efficient. For example, current drivers or former drivers now in a managerial role who hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

- **Senior Management**: C-level executives should be involved to ensure that the adopted solutions align with the organization's broader strategic objectives.

The effective selection of seat belt hardware and software is about compliance, championing safety, and ensuring the welfare of drivers and passengers. This SOP chapter should be used as a guiding document to make these software and hardware decisions methodically, combining internal insights with industry best practices.

Chapter 3
Purchasing and Evaluating Vehicle Seat Belt Safety Systems

Establishing clear criteria from the outset as it specifically relates to seat belt safety features will help ensure that a fleet's overall systems and policies for the procurement of new vehicles will be as safe and comprehensive as possible. This includes assessing the safety records and seat belt technology of potential vehicle models to maintain compliance with seat belt safety regulations. This chapter aims to outline the practices and guidelines pertaining to the purchasing process, with particular emphasis on vehicles and technological additions. The content of this chapter considers current practices, best practices, and the roles of various stakeholders in the process.

Current Existing Practices for Purchasing and Evaluating

- **Uniform Seat Belt Compliance Decisions**: TSR member organizations have established standards specifically for ensuring seat belt safety compliance in their vehicle fleets. These standards are uniform across the organization's fleet of commercial vehicles and are initiated at the organization level. For organizations operating in a multinational context, a consistent approach to seat belt safety is developed through processes initiated at the global level.

- **Vehicle Safety Inspection for Seat Belt Compliance**: Prior to finalizing a commercial vehicle purchase, a comprehensive safety inspection focused on seat belts as part of the overall safety compliance is conducted by procurement managers or equivalent within individual organizations. This inspection is crucial to ascertain the vehicle's safety and its adherence to seat belt safety standards.

- **Budget Consideration for Seat Belt Safety Retrofits**: Before initiating any retrofit specifically related to seat belt safety in commercial vehicles, the available budget is reviewed. If funds are available, the specific agency responsible for fleet safety should be requested to initiate a pilot program focusing on enhancing seat belt safety features in existing vehicles.

Industry Best Practices for Purchasing and Evaluating

- **Emphasize Selection of Vehicles with best-in-class Seat Belt Safety Innovations**: When creating new vehicle specifications or choosing vehicles, give precedence to those outfitted with or close to state-of-the-art seat belt safety technologies. This includes integrated systems combining seat belt pretensioners, load limiters, and seat belt reminders for all seating positions. Such features not only enhance occupant safety during crashes but also foster consistent seat belt usage among all passengers, thereby significantly elevating overall vehicle safety standards. For a comprehensive list of recommended technological features and systems, please refer to the appendix.

- **Adopt Fleet Safety Standards**: Ensure that vehicle purchasing processes align with fleet safety standards as they pertain to various aspects of seatbelt safety systems. These standards specify baseline features and/or performance measures that result in superior crash test ratings and integrated safety features.

- **Implement Advanced Seat Belt Utilization Monitoring Systems**: Invest in best-in-class technology that not only monitors seat belt usage in real-time across the fleet, but also provides instant alerts to drivers when seat belts are unfastened. The integration of these systems is a critical step in ensuring adherence to seat belt safety protocols.

- **Forge Strategic Alliances with Technology Innovators for Seat Belt Safety Enhancements**: Establish strategic partnerships with vendors at the forefront of safety technology innovations, particularly those specializing in advanced seat belt safety systems are characterized by complementary strengths, a shared vision for innovation, clear agreements on intellectual property, and a mutual understanding of the commercialization path. These alliances ensure that your fleet remains equipped with the most advanced seat belt safety technologies, enhancing overall vehicle safety and compliance.

Future Read Suggestion: A relevant case study can be drawn from the paper titled "Seat Belts: A Review of Technological Milestones, Regulatory Advancements, and Anticipated Future Trajectories." This study provides an insightful overview of the evolution of seat belt technology, highlighting key milestones and regulatory changes that have shaped its development. It emphasizes the enduring importance of seat belts as a safety innovation in automotive history and discusses how seat belt systems continue to evolve, integrating advanced sensor technologies to adapt to changing vehicle designs and increasing automation.[13]

Easy to Implement Takeaways for Purchasing and Evaluating

- **Enhanced Contracting Inspection for Seat Belt Safety**: During the contracting phase, introduce a specific safety standard component that focuses on seat belt safety. This ensures that all vehicles or components purchased comply with a set of predefined seat belt safety criteria. Items to pay attention to include:
  - Presence of Seat Belt Pretensioners and Load Limiters
  - Enhanced Seat Belt Reminder Systems
  - Durability and Quality of Seat Belts
  - Real-Time Seat Belt Monitoring Capabilities
  - Adjustability and Comfort
  - Compliance with Current Safety Regulations of your Organization

By incorporating these specific criteria into the contracting process, organizations can ensure a high level of seat belt safety in their vehicle fleet.

- **Engage in Strategic Tech Partnerships for Safety Enhancements**: Form alliances with leading technology vendors specializing in seat belt safety.

[12] Agarwal, G., Kidambi, N., and Lange, R. (2021). "Seat Belts: A Review of Technological Milestones, Regulatory Advancements, and Anticipated Future Trajectories," SAE Technical Paper 2021-01-5097. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.4271/2021-01-5097.

Responsibilities

- **Local Procurement Managers**: Local managers should be actively involved in the purchasing decisions to ensure that the needs of the specific region or department are met.

- **Global Procurement Managers**: While local input is critical, global managers should also play an active role to ensure consistency, adherence to global standards, and the safety of the driver.

Incorporating best practices in the purchasing process not only ensures organizational efficiency, but also guarantees the safety and well-being of its stakeholders.

Considerations

Involve input from drivers and operators in vehicle and equipment procurement decisions related to seat belt safety. Research interviews with drivers conducted by Cities Reimagined in 2023 indicated that drivers had unique insights on seatbelt design. One waste services driver said, "The only thing about this seat belt that I don't love is that you can't adjust the height. Some guys are bigger and need an extender- and that works fine but if you're shorter than me sometimes that doesn't work well." [14] Allowing for the input and experience of drivers to guide decision making will enhance the adoption of seat belt safety practices.

TOGETHER FOR SAFER ROADS   [14] 1:1 Field Research Interview conducted by Cities Reimagined, October 2023.

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Chapter 4
Seat Belt Utilization Enforcement

Seat belt usage significantly reduces the risk of injury during crashes. While there is a wealth of data on the general effectiveness of seat belt usage in reducing the risk of injury and death in crashes, specific statistics focused exclusively on commercial fleets are not readily available in the public domain, hinting at an opportunity for further attention and research. From the statistics available, the impact of seat belt usage is significant. Seat belts reduce the risk of death by **45%** and the risk of serious injury by 50% for drivers and front-seat passengers. In light trucks, the use of seat belts reduces the risk of fatal injury by **60%** and moderate to critical injuries by **65%**.[15] Over three-quarters of those ejected during a fatal crash die from their injuries. This SOP chapter outlines the procedures for enforcing seat belt usage, blending internal practices, and interactive methods to ensure compliance and awareness.

Industry Best Practices for Seat Belt Utilization Enforcement

- **Focus on the Consistent and Proper Use of Seat Belts**:
  - Always wear a seat belt, irrespective of the journey's length or familiarity with the route.
  - Ensure that the seat belt fits snugly across the pelvis and rib cage, away from the neck and stomach.

- **Education and Awareness Beyond Routine Training**:
  - Always wear a seat belt, irrespective of the journey's length or familiarity with the route.
  - Ensure that the seat belt fits snugly across the pelvis and rib cage, away from the neck and stomach.

- **Regular Inspection and Maintenance**:
  - Frequently inspect seat belts for signs of wear, tear, or malfunction.
  - Replace damaged or non-functional seat belts immediately to ensure all hardware is functional and usable.

- **Legislation and Enforcement**:
  - Certain behaviors compromise the safety benefits of seat belts and present a significant challenge for fleet managers. For example drivers who "trick" the seat belt system — by clipping in the seat belt but sitting on top of it. This is an important aspect that requires the enforcement of rigorous seat belt laws to ensure high compliance rates.

Easy to Implement Takeaways

- **Compliance Records**: Maintaining seat belt compliance records serves as an effective tool to monitor and enforce seat belt usage.

- **Anecdotal Storytelling**: Giving drivers the opportunity to share real-life stories and anecdotes

makes the necessity of seat belt usage more relatable and impactful. The Colorado Department of Transportation's seat belt video series showcases real-life stories of victims and their families, highlighting the life-saving difference seat belts can make. These stories include accounts of both the tragic outcomes of not wearing seat belts and the life-saving effects of buckling up.[16]

- **One-on-One Training**: Personalized training sessions ensure that individuals understand the importance of seat belts and the correct way to use them. As part of the Buckle Up America Initiative, AB&SBSC (Air Bag & Seat Belt Safety Campaign) sponsored numerous events, conferences, and one-on-one meetings to promote the correct use of occupant restraints. This involvement fostered a growing network of public and private groups advocating for seat belt use.

- **Utilizing Public Resources**: Leveraging publicly available content, like videos from "Hang Up and Drive," advocates for distraction-free roads and even more comprehensive ones such as the Buckle of America campaign offer a cost-effective way to educate and enforce seat belt usage.

- **Statistical Share-outs**: Incorporating real-time statistics on seat belt compliance and crash prevention makes enforcement messages more compelling. An example of such a share out could be the shocking rate of about 50% of passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2021 were not using seat belts, with 57% of those killed during nighttime being unrestrained.[17]

Responsibilities

- **Designated Safety Officers**: Individuals specifically tasked with safety enforcement should be at the forefront of ensuring seat belt usage.

- **Department Heads**: It is crucial that each department head ensures their team understands and adheres to seat belt usage policies.

- **All Employees**: Every individual, irrespective of their role, holds responsibility for their safety and that of others by ensuring they always wear a seat belt.

Seat belt usage enforcement is not merely about compliance; it's a commitment to the safety and well-being of every individual on the road. By blending best practices, leveraging public resources, and ensuring interactive engagement, fleets can create a culture where seat belt usage is second nature.

[16] Colorado Department of Transportation. (n.d.). Seat Belt Stories. [Website]. Retrieved from https://www.codot.gov/safety/seatbelts-carseats/seat-belt-stories&#8203.
[17] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (n.d.). Seat Belt Safety: Buckle Up America. [Website]. Retrieved from https://www.nhtsa.gov&#8203.

Chapter 5
Communication and Awareness

This chapter outlines best practices to guide internal communications to increase awareness of seatbelt safety policies. Prior to developing internal communications strategies and procedures, ensure that your company has well-defined seat belt safety policies in place. These policies should be written in a clear and easily understandable language and easily accessible to all employees, as this type of example illustrates.[18]

Current Existing Practices for Communication and Awareness

- **Safety Manuals and Documentation**: Safety manuals or handbooks exist within member organizations that employees can reference. These documents outline requirements and procedures for seatbelt usage.

- **Communication Tools**: Member organizations use various communication tools, such as email, intranet, YouTube, and mobile apps, to disseminate safety information, updates, and reminders.

- **Reporting and Incident Response**: Establish a clear procedure for reporting safety incidents, near misses, and hazards. Encourage employees to report incidents without fear of repercussions. Develop a thorough incident response plan that includes investigations, corrective actions, and communication.

Industry Best Practices for Communication and Awareness

Ensuring seat belt safety within fleets relies heavily on effective communication and awareness strategies. Raising awareness about the importance of seat belts and ensuring open communication channels can significantly boost adherence to safety protocols. The following are industry best practices for communication and awareness related to seat belt safety for fleets:

- **Safety Campaigns and Workshops**: Organize regular campaigns and workshops emphasizing the importance of seat belt use, sharing statistics, and real-life examples of seat belt effectiveness.

- **Clear Safety Policies**: Create and disseminate a clear and comprehensive seat belt safety policy. Ensure every member of the fleet understands the company's stance on seat belt usage. The following six recommendations protect drivers and passengers, but also minimize the risk of liability for the company. It is a collaborative effort between the company, its drivers, and regulatory bodies to ensure that road safety is a top priority.
  - **Mandatory Seat Belt Use**: Companies must enforce policies requiring all drivers and passengers in commercial vehicles to wear seat belts whenever the vehicle is in motion. This applies regardless of the distance to be traveled or the speed at which the vehicle will be operating.

- ○ **Responsibility for Compliance**: Drivers are not only responsible for their own seat belt use, but also for ensuring that all passengers in the vehicle are wearing seat belts. This responsibility extends to educating passengers about the importance of seat belt use and enforcing compliance.
  - ○ **Disciplinary Actions**: Failure to adhere to the seat belt policy should result in disciplinary actions against the driver. These actions may range from verbal warnings for a first offense to more severe penalties for repeated violations.
  - ○ **Training and Education**: Include seat belt safety as a part of the driver training programs. Drivers should be educated on the safety benefits of seat belt use, how to properly wear a seat belt, and the potential consequences of non-compliance with seat belt laws and company policies.
  - ○ **Monitoring and Enforcement**: Use technology to monitor seat belt use among drivers. Vehicles equipped with seat belt sensors can alert fleet managers to compliance issues in real-time, allowing for immediate corrective action.
  - ○ **Incentives for Compliance**: To encourage seat belt use, offer incentives for drivers who consistently comply with seat belt policies. These incentives can include recognition awards, bonuses, or other perks.

- **Safety News**: Periodically distribute safety bulletins containing information on the importance of seat belts, new research findings, and updates to regulations. The following sources regularly publish research and regulatory news on commercial seat belt safety and other related topics:
  - ○ **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)**: The FMCSA's website is a primary resource for information on regulations, safety programs, and research concerning commercial vehicle safety in the United States. It provides access to data, reports, and tools designed to improve road safety for commercial motor vehicle (CMV) operations.
  - ○ **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)**: NHTSA offers a wide range of resources related to traffic safety, including research and data on seat belt usage, crash statistics, and safety campaigns. Fleet managers can find valuable information on vehicle safety standards and initiatives aimed at reducing road fatalities and injuries.
  - ○ **Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA)**: CVSA is an international organization aimed at improving commercial vehicle safety. The alliance provides updates on safety initiatives, inspection standards, and regulatory changes affecting commercial vehicles. Their resources are valuable for understanding compliance and enforcement trends.
  - ○ **Transport Topics**: This is a widely recognized news source in the transportation and trucking industry, offering updates on legislation, safety regulations, and industry trends. Their coverage includes new research findings and regulatory changes affecting fleet operations.
  - ○ **Safety+Health Magazine**: Published by the National Safety Council, this magazine offers insights into workplace safety, including topics relevant to fleet safety management. Articles cover best practices, research findings, and regulatory news related to commercial driving and vehicle safety.
  - ○ **Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)**: IIHS provides research and statistical data on vehicle safety, crash testing results, and safety ratings. Fleet managers can use this resource to make informed decisions about fleet vehicles and safety equipment.
  - ○ **American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI)**: ATRI conducts transportation research with a focus on the trucking industry's challenges, including safety, security, and sustainability. Their reports and analyses can help fleet managers understand industry trends and implement best safety practices.

- **Feedback Mechanism**: Establish a system where drivers can report issues, ask questions, or provide feedback related to seat belt use and safety. A template Seat Belt Driver Feedback Form is available in the appendix. This template allows drivers to clearly communicate their concerns or suggestions related to safety and seatbelt use, ensuring that their feedback is documented and can be addressed appropriately by management or the safety department.

- **Safety Training**: Include seat belt safety in driver training programs, and offer refreshers periodically. This not only educates drivers but also reinforces the importance of seat belt use.
    - **Smith System Driver Improvement Institute**: Known for their "5 Keys to Safe Driving," Smith System offers training that emphasizes on-road, hands-on techniques for defensive driving. Their courses are designed to improve driver behavior and decision-making in real-world driving scenarios. Website: Smith System
    - **National Safety Council (NSC)**: The NSC offers a comprehensive range of safety courses, including defensive driving for commercial truck drivers. Their training programs are aimed at reducing collisions and fostering a culture of safety among fleet operations. Website: National Safety Council

- **Promote Peer Discussions**: Encourage drivers to discuss seat belt safety amongst themselves, creating a culture of shared responsibility. During your next driver staff meeting, try prompting a discussion with these three questions:
    - **Experiences with Seat Belt Usage**: "Can anyone share a personal experience where wearing a seat belt in a commercial vehicle either prevented an injury or, conversely, a situation where not wearing a seat belt led to a more severe outcome during a crash? How did this experience change your perspective on seat belt safety?"
    - **Overcoming Resistance to Seat Belt Use**: "What are some common reasons drivers give for not wearing seat belts while driving commercial vehicles, and how can we as a group address these concerns or misconceptions? Are there any strategies or educational materials that have proven effective in increasing seat belt compliance among your peers?"
    - **Impact of Seat Belt Safety on Professional Driving**: "How does the culture of safety, specifically regarding seat belt use, within our companies and the broader commercial driving industry impact your day-to-day operations? Have you noticed any changes in attitudes towards seat belt safety over your time as a driver, and what role do you think peer discussions and company policies play in this shift?"

  These questions are designed to facilitate open conversation about seat belt safety, encourage sharing of personal experiences, and explore strategies to improve safety compliance among commercial truck drivers.

- **Rewards and Recognition**: Recognize and reward drivers who consistently adhere to seat belt safety protocols, creating a positive reinforcement system.[19] A Rewards and Recognitions Program outline is available in the appendix.

- **Visual Communication**: Display posters, stickers, and other visual reminders about seat belt safety in areas frequented by drivers, like break rooms or dispatch centers.

Easy to Implement Takeaways

- **Visual Aids and Signage**: Visual aids are an effective first-step in communicating and reinforcing important safety messages. These messages should resonate with the driver. For example,

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[19] How to Build a Driver Safety Rewards Program: Incentives That Work. (2023) Samsara.

the NYC fleet created seat belt posters that said, "Buckle up, the life you save WILL be your own. Seat belts reduce crash related injuries and deaths by half." Signage should be placed prominently in vehicles and near the ignition.

- FMCSA I Buckle Up Sign 1

- FMCSA I Buckle Up Sign 2

- **User Manuals and Guides**: Include clear instructions on how to properly wear and adjust seat belts in user manuals and vehicle guides.

- **Celebrate Safety Milestones**: Acknowledge and celebrate milestones in seat belt usage and system performance, such as periods without seat belt-related violations, to underscore its importance. Reward teams, departments, and employees who consistently demonstrate exemplary seat belt usage. Hold employees accountable for adhering to seat belt safety standards. Implement an incentive system that specifically rewards safe behavior related to seat belt usage, encouraging a culture of safety and compliance within the organization. A Rewards and Recognitions Program outline is available in the appendix.

- **Safety Representatives**: Dedicated safety representatives or officers will enhance the focus on maintaining safety standards when it comes to specific seat belt safety issues and solutions and serve as a resource for employees. Safety representatives would be responsible for the following:
  - **Safety Compliance**: Ensure adherence to all seat belt safety regulations and standards within the fleet. Regularly monitor and adapt to changes in seat belt safety laws, updating company policies and training accordingly.
  - **Safety Inspections**: Perform regular inspections to verify proper seat belt usage among fleet drivers. Identify non-compliance issues, recommend corrective actions, and reinforce the importance of consistent seat belt use for driver safety.
  - **Safety Communication**: Promote a culture of safety by regularly communicating safety updates, guidelines, and reminders related to seat belt compliance to employees and safety partners. Encourage open lines of communication for reporting safety concerns. Below are a few examples of email campaigns, press releases, and talking point templates for partners that could be adopted for your communication purposes.
    - FMCSA Talking Points 1
    - FMCSA Sample Release
    - FMCSA Sample Email Outreach
  - **Seat Belt Safety Committee**: Form a committee focused on seat belt safety, involving employee representatives to address related issues, gather feedback, and collectively make recommendations for enhancing seat belt usage and compliance.
  - **Documentation and Reporting**: Keep detailed records of all seat belt safety activities, incidents, training programs, and the effectiveness of the seat belt safety program. Regularly report these findings to management to inform further safety strategies.
  - **Audits**: Organize and engage in safety audits specifically targeting seat belt usage, both internally and with external organizations. Follow through on compliance with audit recommendations regarding seat belt safety.
  - **Risk Assessment**: Identify and evaluate potential risks related to seat belt non-compliance.

Develop and implement targeted strategies to mitigate these risks, ensuring enhanced safety and adherence to seat belt usage guidelines.

Responsibilities

For enhancing seat belt safety among fleets, emphasizing communication and awareness is crucial. The following stakeholders are integral to these endeavors:

- **Fleet Managers**: They play a pivotal role in driving seat belt safety by setting protocols and ensuring adherence. Regular communication about the importance of seat belts can emphasize a safety-first culture.

- **Fleet Safety Trainers**: Organizing regular training sessions, workshops, and refresher courses can help inculcate the importance of wearing seat belts among drivers.

- **Vehicle Manufacturers**: Manufacturers can partner with fleet operators to provide vehicles with advanced seat belt reminders or technologies to promote seat belt usage.

- **Insurance Companies**: Through premium incentives or awareness campaigns, insurance companies can encourage fleets to adopt and maintain strict seat belt safety practices.

- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**: NGOs that focus on road safety can play a role in increasing awareness through community outreach, educational campaigns, and collaborations with fleets.

- **Drivers and Passengers**: Ultimately, the individuals using the vehicles should be educated and made aware of the risks associated with not using seat belts. Their feedback can also be invaluable in understanding potential roadblocks to regular seat belt usage.

Using a collaborative approach with all these stakeholders can create a more comprehensive and effective seat belt safety strategy for fleets.

Chapter 6
Documentation and Records

Consistent and comprehensive documentation is essential for ensuring seatbelt utilization. It helps with compliance, accountability, and continuous improvement efforts that can ultimately save lives and prevent injuries in crashes The following best practices for documentation and records increase seatbelt usage.

Current Existing Practices for Documentation and Records

- **Continuous Improvement Documentation**: Document efforts to continually improve seatbelt safety, whether through technology advancements, policy updates, or public awareness campaigns.

- **Testing and Certification Records**: Maintain records of seat belt testing and certifications to prove that your products or vehicles meet safety standards.

- **Manufacturing and Installation Records**: Document the manufacturing and installation processes of seat belts, ensuring quality control and compliance with safety standards.

- **Maintenance and Inspection Records**: Keep detailed records of regular seat belt maintenance and inspections to ensure they are in good working condition.

- **Product Recalls and Replacements**: Maintain records of any seatbelt-related product recalls, replacements, or upgrades, including the notification process to affected parties.

Industry Best Practices for Documentation and Records

Maintaining comprehensive documentation and records related to seat belt safety is essential for fleet operations. The industry best practices below ensure the safety of drivers and passengers and help fleets remain in compliance with regulations:

- **Regular Safety Audits**: Schedule regular audits to verify that all safety documentation is up-to-date and accurate. This proactive approach can identify gaps in record-keeping and offer opportunities for improvement.

- **Driver Training Records**: Ensure that every driver has undergone seat belt safety training and that their participation and completion are documented.

- **Digital Record Keeping**: Transition from paper logs to digital platforms or fleet management software to maintain records. Digital systems often provide more organized, accessible, and reliable data storage.

- **Maintenance Logs**: Document regular vehicle inspections and maintenance. Include a dedicated section for seat belt checks, ensuring they are in good working condition.

- **Incident Reports**: In the event of any incident, ensure that there's thorough documentation, especially focusing on seat belt use and its condition during the incident.

- **Data Backup**: Regularly back up all safety records, both digitally and with physical copies, to prevent data loss.

- **Policy Documentation**: Maintain a clear and updated fleet safety policy, emphasizing the importance of seat belt use. Make sure this is accessible to all employees and is reviewed periodically.

- **Feedback Loop with Drivers**: Establish a system where drivers can report seat belt malfunctions or issues and ensure that these are addressed promptly.

- **Integration with Telematics**: Modern fleet management often integrates with telematics systems. Use these systems to monitor seat belt use and maintain these records as part of the overall safety documentation.

- **Periodic Review and Updates**: Laws, regulations, and industry standards evolve over time. Periodically review and update documentation practices to stay compliant and ensure optimal safety.

Easy to Implement Takeaways

- **Seat Belt Usage Surveys and Data**: Conduct surveys and collect data on seatbelt usage among drivers and passengers, which can inform safety campaigns and initiatives. A sample Seat Belt Usage Survey is available in the appendix.

- **Training Records**: Keep records of employee and driver training programs related to seatbelt safety, showing that individuals understand the importance of proper usage.

- **Policy and Procedure Documentation**: Document clear policies and procedures related to seatbelt usage and safety within your organization, whether you're an automotive manufacturer, a fleet manager, or part of a safety advocacy group.

- **Complaint and Feedback Logs**: Maintain logs of seatbelt-related complaints and feedback from users, and use this information to make necessary improvements.

Responsibilities

For seat belt safety within fleets, maintaining accurate documentation and records ensures compliance with safety regulations and provides evidence of due diligence in promoting seat belt use. The primary stakeholders responsible for documentation and records are:

- **Fleet Managers**: These individuals oversee the comprehensive records of all drivers, vehicles, and incidents. Ensuring each vehicle's safety features, including seat belts, are consistently checked and logged is their responsibility.

- **Safety Compliance Officers**: These officers, often within larger fleet organizations, ensure that all safety protocols, including those related to seat belts, are adhered to, and their documentation is maintained.

- **Vehicle Maintenance Personnel**: Those responsible for the regular maintenance of fleet vehicles

should also be tasked with checking seat belt functionality and documenting their findings.

- **Third-Party Auditors**: External auditors can be employed to assess and validate the seat belt safety records, ensuring they meet industry and regulatory standards.

- **Governmental and Regulatory Bodies**: These entities often require fleets to submit regular safety reports, which would include seat belt safety records.

- **Drivers**: Every driver should be responsible for daily or periodic logs that record any issues with their vehicle's seat belts, which are then submitted to fleet managers or other designated personnel.

- **Data Management Systems Providers**: Companies that provide fleet management software can include features that help fleets document and record seat belt usage and safety checks.

Proper documentation and record-keeping are fundamental to ensuring a comprehensive approach to seat belt safety across fleets. Collaboration between these stakeholders ensures a safer environment for all road users.

In Conclusion

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document provides a comprehensive and practical guide for improving seat belt utilization and safety in fleet management. It addresses the critical issue of seat belt compliance, acknowledging the persistent challenges often seen amongst commercial drivers. The SOP outlines six key areas: Training, Software and Hardware Selection, Purchasing and Evaluating Safety Systems, Enforcement of Utilization, Communication Strategies, and Documentation of Compliance. By integrating industry best practices with feedback from various stakeholders, this document serves as a unique and extensive resource, offering actionable strategies to enhance seat belt usage and safety in public and private fleets. **Its ultimate goal is to foster a culture of safety, ensuring that every journey is safeguarded by the use of seat belts.**

Appendix

Glossary

Seat Belt Compliance: The act of properly wearing and securing a seat belt while operating or riding in a motor vehicle.

Technology Integration: The incorporation of seat belt safety technology and telematics systems into the fleet management process.

Safety Awareness: The level of consciousness and understanding among employees regarding the importance of seat belt usage.

Fleet: A group of vehicles owned or operated by an organization.

Seat Belt Safety Best Practices: Established guidelines and recommendations for the proper use of seat belts in vehicles.

Fleet Manager: The person responsible for overseeing fleet operations.

Driver: An individual operating a vehicle within the fleet.

Spot Training Model: A targeted training approach aimed at addressing specific seatbelt safety issues as they arise.

Behavioral Change Model: A structured approach to promote positive changes in driver behavior regarding seat belt usage.

Purchasing: The process of procuring vehicles, seatbelt-related equipment, and training materials.

Equipment Check: Inspection of seatbelt systems to ensure they are in good working condition.

Safety Compliance Officers: Professionals responsible for ensuring that a company or organization adheres to relevant safety standards and regulations.

Third-Party Auditors: Independent entities that evaluate and verify an organization's compliance with industry standards or regulatory requirements.

Governmental and Regulatory Bodies: Official organizations at various levels of government that create, enforce, and oversee regulations and standards in specific industries or sectors.

Insurance Companies: Entities that provide risk management in the form of insurance policies, offering coverage for various potential losses or damages.

Data Management Systems Providers: Companies that offer software or platforms designed to systematically collect, store, and analyze data for organizational efficiency and decision-making.

Fleet Safety Trainers: Professionals who specialize in educating and training fleet drivers and managers on best practices for road safety and compliance.

Writing S.M.A.R.T. Goals:
One Page Guide[20]

SMART goals are a framework for setting clear and achievable objectives. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. When creating goals, ensure they meet these criteria:

- **Specific (S)**: Clearly define your goal. What exactly do you want to accomplish? Ask yourself the who, what, where, when, and why questions to make it specific.

  - **Example:** "Increase seat belt usage by 20% by implementing a safety training curriculum."

- **Measurable (M)**: Establish how you will measure your progress and determine when the goal is achieved. Use concrete metrics or data to track your success.

  - **Example**: "Track website traffic using Google Analytics, and measure success by comparing monthly traffic data before and after implementing the content strategy."

- **Achievable (A)**: Ensure that your goal is realistic and attainable given your resources and constraints. Consider the skills, time, and resources required.

  - **Example**: "Ensure that we have the necessary staff and tools to create and promote the safety content effectively."

- **Relevant (R)**: Make sure the goal aligns with your overall objectives and is relevant to your current situation. It should contribute to your mission and long-term vision.

  - **Example**: "Increasing seat belt safety usage is relevant because it will reduce injuries and fatalities."

- **Time-bound (T)**: Set a specific deadline for achieving the goal. This creates a sense of urgency and helps with planning.

  - **Example**: "Increase seat belt usage by 20% within the next six months."

SMART goals provide clarity, focus, and motivation. They empower you to track your progress, stay on course, and achieve meaningful outcomes. Write down your SMART goals, revisit them regularly, and adjust them as needed to stay on the path to success. For an in-depth guide on writing SMART goals click here.

Components for High-Performing Safety Vehicles with a Focus on Seat Belt Safety

- **Advanced Seat Belt Systems**: Look for vehicles with seat belts that include pretensioners and load limiters, both potentially contributing to higher seat belt usage rates and enhancing safety during a collision.

- **Seat Belt Reminder Systems**: Ensure vehicles are equipped with audible and visual reminders for all seats to encourage seat belt usage.

- **Adjustable Upper Belts**: Select vehicles with adjustable upper belts to ensure a comfortable and proper fit for passengers of different sizes.

- **Rear Center Lap/Shoulder Belts**: Opt for vehicles that provide lap/shoulder belts in all rear seating positions, including the middle seat.

- **Energy-Absorbing Seat Belt Technology**: Look for seat belts designed to absorb energy and reduce the force on the occupant's chest during a crash.

- **Seat Belt Integration with Airbags**: Choose vehicles where the seat belt system and airbags are integrated to work together for optimal protection.

- **Automatic Locking Retractor (ALR)**: Ensure the vehicle's seat belt retractor automatically locks to secure a child seat without needing a separate locking clip.

- **Enhanced Rear Seat Protection**: Prioritize vehicles with advanced safety features for rear seat passengers, including seat belt pretensioners and load limiters.

- **Emergency Locking Retractor (ELR)**: Check for seat belts with an emergency locking retractor for the driver and front passenger, allowing normal movement but locking in case of a sudden stop or impact.

Seat Belt Safety Driver Feedback Form

Date: [Insert Date]
Driver Name: [Insert Name]
Vehicle Number: [Insert Vehicle Number]
Mileage: [Insert Mileage]

Type of Feedback (Please circle one):
- Issue Report
- Question
- Safety Suggestion
- Seatbelt Specific Feedback
- Other (Please Specify) _____

Description of Feedback:
[Provide a detailed description of the issue, question, or feedback. Include any relevant circumstances or suggestions for how the issue could be resolved or the question answered.]

_____

_____

_____

Location and Time (if applicable):
[Specify the location and time when the issue occurred or when you have observed the condition related to your feedback.]

_____

_____

Were any safety procedures violated? (Yes/No):
If yes, please describe:

_____

_____

_____

Suggested Action or Solution (if any):
[If you have a suggestion for addressing the issue or question, please describe it here.]

_____

_____

Seat Belt Safety Driver Feedback Form

Driver's Signature: _____

Date: [Insert Date]

- -

For Office Use Only

Received By: _____

Date Received: [Insert Date]

Action Taken:
[Detail any actions taken in response to the feedback, including follow-up dates and responsible parties.]

_____

_____

_____

Follow-Up Required: (Yes/No)
If yes, describe actions and assign to:

_____

_____

_____

Resolved Date: [Insert Date]

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

Rewards and Recognition Program to Improve Seat Belt Safety Outcomes

Company Name: [Your Company Name]
Program Date/Period: [Start Date] - [End Date]

Program Objective: To recognize and reward commercial truck drivers who consistently demonstrate adherence to seat belt safety protocols, thereby promoting a culture of safety within our fleet operations.

Recognition Categories

- **Consistent Safety Compliance**: Recognizing drivers with a perfect seat belt safety compliance record for the specified period.

- **Safety Ambassador**: For drivers who not only comply with seat belt safety protocols, but also actively encourage their peers to do the same.

- **Most Improved Safety Practices**: Acknowledging drivers who have shown the most improvement in seat belt safety compliance over the period.

Rewards

- **Certificate of Recognition**: Awarded to drivers who meet the criteria for any of the above categories.

- **Safety Gear/Equipment**: High-quality safety gear or equipment to enhance the driving experience for "Most Improved Safety Practices" winners.

- **Feature in Company Newsletter**: Highlighting the achievements of recognized drivers in the company's internal newsletter.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must be a full-time driver for [Your Company Name].

- No recorded safety violations (seat belt and other safety violations) during the program period.

Nomination Process

- **Self-Nomination**: Drivers can nominate themselves by submitting a safety compliance report.

- **Peer Nomination**: Drivers can be nominated by their peers, accompanied by a brief description of the nominee's safety practices.

- **Management Nomination**: Supervisors and managers can nominate drivers based on observed safety behavior and compliance records.

Rewards and Recognition Program to Improve Seat Belt Safety Outcomes

Selection Process

- A committee comprising safety officers, fleet managers, and a driver representative will review nominations.

- Winners will be selected based on compliance records, peer/management recommendations, and overall contribution to safety culture.

Driver Acknowledgment:
I acknowledge my participation in the Driver Safety Recognition and Rewards Program and commit to maintaining high safety standards, including consistent seat belt use.

Driver Signature: _____

Date: [Insert Date]

Seat Belt Usage Survey

Thank you for participating in our Seat Belt Usage Survey. Your feedback is crucial in helping us understand seatbelt usage habits among our drivers and passengers. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. All responses will remain confidential.

Part 1: Demographics

Age Range:

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or older

Role:

- Driver
- Passenger
- Both

Type of Vehicle Most Frequently Operated/ Traveled in:

- Light commercial vehicles (e.g., delivery vans)
- Heavy commercial vehicles (e.g., trucks, semis)
- Passenger vehicle used for commercial purposes

Part 2: Seat Belt Usage

How often do you wear a seat belt when driving or traveling in a vehicle?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

What factors influence your decision to wear a seat belt? (Circle all that apply)

- Habit
- Vehicle speed
- Travel distance
- Presence of other passengers
- Law enforcement
- Other (please specify): _____

_____

Have you ever decided not to wear a seat belt? If yes, why? (Open-ended question)

_____

_____

_____

Part 3: Attitudes towards Seat Belt Safety

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you believe wearing a seat belt is for safety?

1	2	3	4	5
not important				extremely important

Do you feel that current seat belt laws and regulations are adequate?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Seat Belt Usage Survey

Would you support stricter enforcement of seat belt rules?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Part 4: Education and Awareness

How well informed do you feel about the risks of not wearing a seat belt?

- Very well informed
- Somewhat informed
- Not very well informed
- Not informed at all

Have you ever participated in any seat belt safety training or education programs?

- Yes
- No

If yes, did it influence your seat belt usage habits?

- Yes, I wear a seat belt more often now
- No, it did not change my habits

What type of information or training would encourage more frequent seat belt use among drivers and passengers? (Open-ended question)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing our Seat Belt Usage Survey. Your input is invaluable in helping us improve safety standards and initiatives.

This survey template can be distributed electronically or in paper form and should be customized as needed to align with the specific goals and context of the safety campaign or initiative being developed.

How to Use this Guide

The Seat Belt Safety Standard Operating Procedures offers a structured approach to improving seat belt safety outcomes within commercial fleets, guiding users through assessment, implementation, communication, and documentation phases. We recommend working through the guide this way:

- **Familiarization**: Begin by familiarizing yourself with the guide's structure and contents, paying close attention to the six chapters that outline the core aspects of seat belt safety. Each chapter addresses a specific area, from training and technology to enforcement and documentation.

- **Assessment and Planning**: Assess your current seat belt safety policies and practices against the recommendations provided in each chapter. Identify areas where your organization may be lacking or could improve. Develop an action plan to address these gaps, utilizing the guide's suggestions as a road map for enhancement.

- **Implementation**: Use the guide as a step-by-step manual for implementing best practices in seat belt safety. This could involve organizing training sessions, upgrading technology, enhancing vehicle safety features, or revising enforcement mechanisms.

- **Communication and Engagement**: Leverage the guide to facilitate communication and engagement on seat belt safety within your organization. This involves not just disseminating information, but also creating platforms for feedback, discussion, and continuous learning.

- **Documentation and Evaluation**: Finally, use the guide to bolster your documentation and evaluation processes. Ensure that all seat belt safety-related activities, from training records to compliance audits, are meticulously documented and regularly reviewed for effectiveness.

While the guide provides a comprehensive framework, it's essential to tailor its recommendations to fit the specific needs, culture, and operations of your organization. We also recommend that you view seat belt safety as an ongoing journey rather than a one-time project. Use the guide not just for initial improvements, but as a living document that evolves with your organization's needs and the latest in safety research and technology. Lastly, it is critically important to engage drivers and staff at all levels in the process. Their insights and feedback can be invaluable in refining your approach to seat belt safety.

By following this guide, your organization can strengthen its commitment to safety and most importantly, protect the lives of those who drive and travel in your vehicles.

Testing this Guide and Providing Feedback on Efficacy

Together for Safer Roads would like feedback from users of this guide in each of its six chapters. If you and your fleet would like to test the strategies outlined in this Standard Operating Procedure Guidebook, we recommend the following actions, organized by chapter:

Chapter One: Training for Seat Belt Compliance

☐ Attend or organize comprehensive seat belt safety training sessions.
☐ Cultivate a culture of safety within the organization through continuous education.
☐ Assess the current knowledge base and training needs of drivers regarding seat belt compliance.

Chapter Two: Seat Belt Software and Hardware Selection

☐ Review and evaluate existing seat belt compliance technologies within the fleet and make a list of the compliance capabilities you are missing in order to monitor seat belt usage.
☐ Conduct pilot tests for new seat belt hardware and software to assess their effectiveness.

Chapter 3: Purchasing and Evaluating Vehicle Seat Belt Safety Systems

☐ Using this guidebook, develop criteria for both the selecting of vehicles with optimal seat belt safety features and/or the retrofitting / updating of current vehicles with new seat belt hardware and software.

Chapter 4: Seat Belt Utilization Enforcement

☐ Take an inventory of your company's current mechanisms for monitoring compliance with seat belt usage policies.
☐ Review the current system for driver accountability and corrective actions for non-compliance. Is there a clear and comprehensive system? Do drivers understand it?
☐ Identify gaps in your company's current compliance system and revise it using the tools and recommendations in this guidebook.

Chapter 5: Communication for Seat Belt Safety Awareness

☐ Compare the Industry Best Practices for Communication and Awareness in Chapter 5 with your company's current communication and awareness practices. Make note of where your company may have gaps, and try filling them with the content and guidance in Chapter 5.
☐ Print and distribute the Seat Belt Safety Driver Feedback Form where drivers can see and access them on a daily basis. Make your drivers aware of the new Feedback Forms and make a concerted effort to collect feedback through these forms.
☐ Host a peer discussion group amongst drivers about seatbelt safety using the three questions in Chapter 5, Item 6. Organize drivers into groups of six and pair a facilitator with each group to host the discussion on these three questions.
☐ Set up a driver incentive program using the guidance provided in Chapter 5 and the "Rewards and Recognition Program to Improve Seat Belt Safety Outcomes" framework in the appendix.

Chapter 6: Documentation of Seat Belt Safety Compliance

- □ Distribute the Seat Belt Usage Survey in the Appendix to at least 10% of your total driver population. This will provide an adequate sample size from which to draw conclusions regarding seat belt usage.

Please send all results and feedback to communications@togetherforsaferroads.org as you collect it within your organization. Your feedback will help Together for Safer Roads improve and expand this guidebook.