



MASSACHUSETTS

Safe Prom/Graduation Campaign

► AT-A-GLANCE

► **Project Characteristics**
Comprehensive Effort
Targeting Safety Belt Use
and Underage Drinking

► **Program Areas**
Occupant Protection
Alcohol and Other Drugs
Youth Programs

► **Targeted Populations**
Teen Drivers and
Passengers

► **Type of Jurisdiction**
State

► **Jurisdiction Size**
6.3 million

► **Funding**
402 Funds: \$48,000

► **Contact**
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Problem Identification

Massachusetts teens are overrepresented in fatal crashes. In 2001, 17-year-olds accounted for 3.6 percent of Massachusetts drivers involved in fatal crashes, while accounting for only 1 percent of licensed drivers in Massachusetts.

According to the 2002 Annual Safety Belt Survey, Massachusetts safety belt use among teen drivers was 50 percent. Safety belt use among teen front-seat passengers was 49 percent. These usage rates compared unfavorably to the 53 percent safety belt use among adult drivers under 65 and the 51 percent safety belt use rate among passengers.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the *Safe Prom/Graduation Campaign* is to:

- Increase teen safety belt use;
- Reduce impaired driving and underage drinking by teens; and
- Increase teen driver compliance with speed and other traffic laws.

Strategies and Activities

The Governor's Highway Safety Bureau (GHSB), a program of the Executive Office of Public Safety, conducted *Safe Prom/Graduation Campaigns* between 2001 and 2003. The 2003 program implemented the following strategies and related activities:

- Created a statewide contest that allowed juniors and seniors to produce a 30-second safe driving radio ad with a prom/graduation theme.
- Promoted the contest to students by placing a poster in every public and private school in the Commonwealth.
- Received 61 ads for the contest from students at 36 schools.
- Arranged prizes from corporate sponsors for the school of the student that submitted the winning radio ad.
- Held an event attended by 300 students at a Boston-area high school to recognize the creativity of the winning student, as well as to attract media coverage for the campaign's safe driving message.
- Generated substantial media coverage through the kick-off event, a statewide news release, and an opinion-editorial article written by the Secretary of Public Safety.
- Aired the winning radio ad for two weeks during prom season.
- Covered the cost of airing the winning radio ad with a \$50,000 donation received from one of the corporate sponsors.
- Coordinated the campaign with other GHSB initiatives.



- Provided mini-grants to 34 public and private high schools for occupant protection and impaired driving/underage drinking programming and grants.
- Provided mini-grants to 23 local police departments for enforcement of liquor laws during the prom/graduation season.
- Distributed State Police-developed poster on prom/graduation safety to all public and private schools.
- Surveyed all private and public high school principals to determine the usefulness of the campaign and its materials in 2002 and 2003.

Results

A preliminary evaluation of the campaign revealed an observed 8 percent increase (to 58 percent) in safety belt use by teen drivers statewide, while teen passenger safety belt use increased 9 percent in the period 2002-2003.

The survey of all private and public high school principals to determine the usefulness of the campaign and its materials indicated an increased involvement by schools in the campaign in two key categories:

- Displayed poster (70 to 74 percent); and
- Student(s) entering contest (1 to 19 percent)

The impact of the campaign on teen involvement in speed and alcohol-related crashes will be known after 2003 data becomes available.