



## DRIVE SMART Virginia Newsletter

### Winter 2009

#### In This Issue

[Winter Car Safety](#)

[Distracted Driving Awareness Day](#)

[Drunk Driving Deaths Decrease](#)

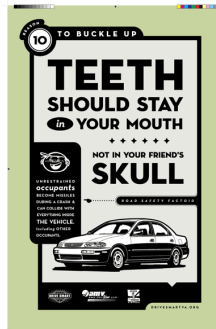
[Truck Driver Health](#)

[Tops Picks for Safe Vehicles](#)

[Calendar](#)

#### Safety Videos

Farm Bureau Insurance and DRIVE SMART Virginia have teamed up to produce some new safety videos. Current topics include drinking and driving and safety belt use. Check them out on our [website](#) - more to be produced soon.



Dear *DRIVE SMART Virginia* supporters:

*This fall has proved to be a busy time for DRIVE SMART Virginia. We have selected a location for our Interstate 81 commercial motor vehicle safety belt campaign, which will be conducted from Wytheville to Abingdon in the spring. Developing partnerships with key players like the Virginia Trucking Association will be a strong focus of this initiative. National Truck Driver Appreciation Week was an important event for us, and we partnered with the Virginia Trucking Association and AAA Mid-Atlantic to conduct outreach activities at three rest areas in Virginia. Due to the generous support of AAA, we were able to provide hot dogs, water, snacks...and safety materials, of course! These events were a great success, and garnered much appreciation from the motoring public.*

*Recognizing the need for sustained messaging of our distracted driving initiative, we mailed campaign toolkits to driver education teachers throughout Virginia. Our 2010*

## Child Seat Inspections

Car crashes are the number one killer of children ages 3 to 14. Unfortunately, 4 out of every 5 child seats are installed incorrectly by parents and caregivers. The Louisa County Sheriff's Office is taking aggressive action to reduce the incidence of car seat and safety belt misuse by establishing a free child seat inspection and education program in Louisa County beginning in January. [Locations and schedule.](#)

*campaign will occur on April 28. With our National Safety Council certification to teach "Alive at 25" in hand, we are reaching out to targeted high schools to provide this excellent training. In order to expand our reach in the public school system, we have purchased videos and posters that deliver traffic safety messaging to our elementary school audience. We are working with the Virginia Department of Education to disseminate this information.*

*Workplace outreach continues to be a major focus for us. We've had speaking engagements throughout the state and we were delighted to be asked to attend the Virginia EMS Symposium. Helping to educate and support a strong base of EMS providers in Virginia meets our goals of fewer fatalities and less trauma on our roadways. Along those same lines, we partnered with Rockingham Mutual Insurance and Safe Kids Virginia to provide child passenger safety training in Harrisonburg. We have, in the past, coordinated safety seat giveaways, but thought this would be a more comprehensive and long lasting action to address traffic safety needs in the community.*

*And finally, we have put a significant amount of time and effort into our website, adding videos, new materials, and working toward the finalization of our teen website. Our website, paired with our Twitter and Facebook presence, will reach the many people who gather most of their information from internet or social media.*

*So there you have it. We're quite busy and very motivated by the strong partnerships we've built in order to do our part in increasing the safety of the roadways of Virginia. With the increase in the safety belt use rate this year to 82.27%, and a reduction in fatalities of 13% (preliminary), I would say that we're well on the way.*

*Janet Brooking  
Executive Director  
DRIVE SMART Virginia*

## Winter Car Safety

With winter upon us, it's important to remember to have you and your car properly prepared for inclement weather. 70% of winter deaths are caused by snow related accidents. Here are some tips on staying safe from the CDC, NHTSA and the NSC:



Have your car tuned up, check the level of antifreeze, make sure the battery is good, and check your tire tread or put on snow tires. Keep emergency gear in your car for everyday trips:

- cell phone

- flashlight
- jumper cables
- sand or kitty litter (for traction)
- ice scraper, snow brush, and small shovel
- blankets
- warning devices (e.g., flares, reflectors)

For long car trips, keep food, water, extra blankets, and required medication on hand. Try to avoid driving in snow or ice storms. If you must travel in bad weather, drive slowly. Let someone know what route you're taking and when you plan to arrive so they can alert authorities if you don't get there.

If your car is parked outside, make sure the exhaust pipe and the area around it are free of snow before you start the car. Snow packed in or around the exhaust pipe can cause high levels of carbon monoxide in the car. Don't sit in a parked car with the engine running unless a window is open. Do not let your car run while parked in a garage.

If your car stalls or gets stuck in snow, light two flares and place one at each end of the car, a safe distance away. Make sure snow has not blocked the exhaust pipe. Then stay in your vehicle and open a window slightly to let in fresh air. Wrap yourself in blankets and run your vehicle's heater for a few minutes every hour to keep warm.

### Distracted Driving Awareness Day



The date has been set for the next Distracted Driving Awareness Day: mark your calendars for April 28, 2010. As always, we will have materials available for you on our website, including new brochures and posters, a Power Point presentation, and a press release.

Although the dangers of driving while distracted has been in the news frequently lately, we still need your help in spreading the word about this important topic. In Virginia, the top five distraction-related crash causes are: eyes not on the road, driver fatigue, looking at a roadside incident/ rubbernecking, cell phones and passengers.

### Drunk Driving Deaths Decrease

The number of deaths resulting from drunk driving crashes has dropped in 40 states and the District of Columbia, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood credited no-nonsense law enforcement for the decline as the agency kicked off the "Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest." campaign, the national holiday crackdown on impaired driving which runs December 16th through January 3rd.



Virginia's rate dropped 3% from 2007 to 2008; the average drop was about 7%. Drunken-driving deaths have been trending downward since 1982, two years after Mothers Against Drunk Driving began focusing attention on the issue. The states that saw increases were New Hampshire, Kansas, Wyoming, Rhode Island, Idaho, Oklahoma and Colorado. 11,773 people were killed in drunken driving crashes in 2008 for a rate of 0.4 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. [Full story](#)

### Improving the Health of Truck Drivers



A [study](#) published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* shows promising improvements in the overall safety and health of truck drivers.

The program incorporated Web-based learning and driving competitions to make truckers aware of safety issues; individualized health counseling was also provided.

It was found that participants spent less time driving over the speed limit and had fewer hard-braking incidents. Additionally, the truck drivers reduced their weight by an average of eight pounds, lowered their consumption of fats and sugar, and increased their levels of physical activity.

### Top Picks for Safe Vehicles

Ford, Subaru and Volkswagen lead the insurance industry's annual list of the safest new vehicles, according to The Virginia-based Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. The Institute awarded its "top safety pick" to 19 passenger cars and eight sport utility vehicles for the 2010 model year. The Institute substantially reduced the number of awards compared with 2009, because of tougher requirements for roof strength.



Ford Motor Co. and its Volvo unit received the most awards with six, followed by five awards apiece for Japanese automaker Subaru and German automaker Volkswagen AG and its Audi unit.

Chrysler Group LLC received four awards followed by two each for Honda Motor Co. and General Motors Co. Toyota Motor Corp., BMW AG, Mazda Motor Corp. and Mitsubishi Motors Corp. were shut out in the annual IIHS review. [Read More](#)

### Upcoming Events

April 11 - 13, 2010