

THE OUTREACH AND EDUCATION 2010 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

Pursuant to Section 4127 of the
Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
(P.L. 109-59)
August 2010

Section 4127 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (P.L. 109-59) prescribes the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) activities for conducting outreach and education programs. Section 4127 directs the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to conduct, through any combination of grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements, the outreach and education program that FMCSA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) will administer. The Secretary is also required to transmit an annual report to Congress on the programs and activities carried out under this section.

The FMCSA pursues increased outreach and education initiatives actively to promote safe operation and the best highway practices for commercial motor vehicles (CMV) and passenger vehicles. The FMCSA's outreach and education programs support the DOT's strategic objective to "enhance public health and safety by working toward the elimination of transportation-related deaths and injuries." The FMCSA's outreach and education activities are vital to the Agency's goal of reducing crashes and crash-related injuries and fatalities by preventing and minimizing the severity of truck and bus crashes.

The FMCSA is responsible for regulating the safety of interstate truck and motorcoach travel in the United States. Its safety goal is to reduce CMV crashes and fatalities on the Nation's roadways to 0.160 fatalities per 100 million total vehicle miles of travel by 2011. There was a 12.3 percent reduction in fatalities in crashes involving large trucks, from 4,822 in 2007 to 4,229 in 2008. To accomplish its safety goal, the Agency relies on strong partnerships with its stakeholders. In addition, FMCSA provides information to increase public awareness about the transportation of household goods in interstate commerce to enable consumers to avoid becoming victims of moving fraud.

Through this document, FMCSA is reporting on the following initiatives completed or underway in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010: (1) the Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks (TACT) Program, (2) the CMV Safety Belt Usage Improvement Program, (3) the Passenger Carrier Safety Outreach Program, (4) the Household Goods Consumer Complaint Telephone Hotline, and (5) the Household Goods Consumer Information Program.

TICKETING AGGRESSIVE CARS AND TRUCKS PROGRAM

The FMCSA's primary goal is safety, and its main objective is to save lives and reduce injuries by preventing and minimizing the severity of truck and bus crashes. One strategy that FMCSA employs in meeting this objective is the TACT Program. The TACT Program is a high-visibility

traffic enforcement project conducted by States and localities to promote safe driving behavior and reduce crashes between CMVs and passenger vehicles. Specifically, a TACT project is comprised of targeted enforcement activities with extensive communications outreach to educate motorists on how to safely share the roadway. A TACT project also includes an evaluation component comprised of pre- and post-activities to measure reductions in crashes, fatalities, and injuries caused by unsafe driving behaviors (i.e., unsafe lane changes, tailgating, and speeding). Since the previous congressional update, FMCSA partner States have continued to find that TACT projects are valuable supplements to more traditional traffic enforcement, particularly when strategically targeted at high-crash corridors, at particular times of the year.

Background

The TACT Program began in 2004 as a collaborative effort between FMCSA and NHTSA to answer a congressional directive to educate the motoring public on how to share the road safely with CMVs. The initial TACT project was sponsored by the State of Washington and was based on the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program model, which is also designed to induce motorists to drive safely. The results from the State of Washington TACT project showed an increase in passenger car drivers' awareness of TACT messages when passing CMVs. Violation rates were also reduced. Overall results showed that TACT was an effective model for reducing the number of passenger-commercial vehicle collisions.

The success of the Washington State TACT project led to the creation of similar TACT projects in four additional States (Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania) and the creation of the TACT State Peer Exchange Network (T-SPEN). The T-SPEN includes State and local program stakeholders; local, State, and Federal Government agencies, including law enforcement agencies; trucking associations; media partners; and other traffic safety organizations. The T-SPEN is designed to share TACT lessons learned and best practices.

Improvements to Date

Throughout FY 2009, FMCSA implemented findings from the TACT best practices study. This study outlined several key themes that impact the success and sustainability of the TACT program. The FMCSA improved the quality of the grant submissions by creating a streamlined set of application instructions and sample proposal outlines to make it easier for States to understand the TACT Program and submit an application. The FMCSA also created a scorecard to assist the FMCSA Division Offices in evaluating TACT grant proposals.

TACT Program Growth

As of the date of this report, there are 21 TACT States and localities. This figure has doubled since the last update to Congress. The FMCSA received positive feedback from the current TACT members, and the new members are excited to be a part of the program. Feedback from T-SPEN is also positive. Public awareness of the program is greater, and the program continues to see crash reductions occur in the TACT corridors compared to the control corridors.

The TACT members include the following:

The original five TACT States (2004 - 2007) continue to be members:

1. Georgia
2. Kentucky
3. North Carolina
4. Pennsylvania
5. Washington

Ten TACT members were added in FY 2008 and FY 2009:

6. Alabama
7. Colorado
8. Indiana
9. Louisiana
10. City of Reno, Nevada
11. Montana
12. New Jersey
13. Oregon
14. City of Austin, Texas
15. Utah

Six TACT members were added in FY 2010 to date – three States and three localities:

16. Arizona
17. Broward County, Florida
18. City of Detroit, Michigan
19. City of San Antonio, Texas
20. Florida
21. South Carolina

FY 2010 TACT Activities

In FY 2010, FMCSA will make three improvements to the TACT Program. These improvements were chosen because they are designed to leverage the success of the TACT Program and make better use of FMCSA resources. Specifically, these improvements are designed to yield better TACT Program evaluation results, make grants more effective, and make it easier for States and localities to learn about and participate in the TACT program.

- **Streamline the Evaluation Component.** Each TACT project currently requires the State or locality to design and conduct three components including communication, enforcement, and evaluation. Each component has proven to be critical to the success of TACT projects. However, the current variations in evaluations are costly and complex. Many States have needed and will need significant assistance with the development and implementation of evaluation plans; other States decided not to apply for a TACT grant because of the complexity of implementing the evaluation component. The FMCSA intends to provide guidance and direction to ensure there is an effective and uniform

evaluation plan administered by each State. This guidance would define evaluation measures and include a reporting format to better assess the success of the TACT project and identify areas for improvement.

- **Continue to Award TACT Grants.** The FMCSA will continue to dedicate \$5 to \$10 million in FY 2011 Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program High Priority funding to increase CMV and non-CMV traffic enforcement projects and programs such as TACT.
- **Improve the TACT Web Site.** The FMCSA will update the TACT Web site to reflect changes and new TACT program information. The TACT Web site, located at www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety-security/tact/, serves as an online resource to help States and localities plan and implement a TACT project. The information and tools provided on this Web site also help to educate motorists and CMV drivers about the dangers of unsafe driving.

CMV SAFETY BELT USAGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The CMV Safety Belt Usage Improvement Program's goal is to increase safety belt use among CMV drivers. The program began after FMCSA's June 2003 "Safety Belt Usage by CMV Drivers" study revealed that only 48 percent of CMV drivers wore safety belts. The CMV Safety Belt Partnership now consists of 30 members including representatives from other Federal agencies, industry associations, insurance companies, safety and law enforcement organizations. In FY 2010, the Agency proactively reached out to motorcoach organizations to request their participation in the partnership. To date, three motorcoach organizations have participated in partnership activities.

Safety belt use among CMV drivers reached an all-time high last year, according to the 2009 Safety Belt Usage by CMV Drivers Survey, a national survey sponsored by the Agency. The study found a record high 74 percent of truck drivers now wear safety belts, compared to 65 percent in 2007.

The FMCSA continues to work closely with the CMV Safety Belt Partnership to develop outreach materials for distribution to motor carriers and CMV drivers. The FMCSA's Outreach and Education Division maintains a Web site dedicated to communicating information on how to increase safety belt use among this population. Available at www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetybelt, the Web site contains educational materials to inform motor carriers and commercial drivers about the importance of wearing a safety belt, successful State enforcement models, relevant research studies, presentations, and public service announcements.

The FMCSA's Outreach and Education Division continues to publish the FMCSA Safety Belt Program e-Update, which highlights Partnership and State activities related to increasing CMV driver safety belt use. This newsletter is distributed nationwide and is available on the Web site.

In FY 2010, the Agency will be working to identify the 26 percent of drivers who are non-users of safety belts and correlate survey data with demographic information to develop profiles of the

non-user population. This information will allow FMCSA to develop targeted messages for the non-user population in FY 2011 and beyond.

PASSENGER CARRIER SAFETY OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Passenger Carrier Safety Outreach Program's goal is to provide the public and the commercial passenger carrier industry up-to-date and comprehensive safety information in order to reduce injuries, crashes, and fatalities. The commercial motorcoach industry transports more than 500 million passengers annually in the United States. While motorcoach travel is one of the safest forms of commercial passenger transportation, crashes involving motorcoaches tend to affect multiple people. The Passenger Carrier Safety Outreach Program provides regulatory, safety, and educational information to the public and industry in a variety of formats, ranging from easy-to-understand brochures to an interactive Web site.

The FMCSA is completing a redesign of the Passenger Carrier section of the Agency's Web site to make it easier to use. The Web site includes an interactive system for individuals and groups to find safe and appropriate interstate motorcoach transportation in their area (www.ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/passenger/home.asp). Referred to as the Passenger Carrier Safety Web site, it provides current safety data about interstate passenger carriers nationwide and focuses on three critical areas – driver, vehicle, and safety management. This system is particularly useful to school districts seeking safe motorcoach transportation for students.

The FMCSA continues to provide motorcoach safety information on the Agency's Web site. The brochures on the Web site provide the motorcoach industry with an overview of essential information in the following regulatory areas: (1) licensing and insurance requirements for for-hire motor carriers of passengers; (2) driver qualifications; (3) hours of service; (4) inspection, repair, and maintenance; (5) safety rules for private motor carriers of passengers; and (6) school bus operations. These easy-to-understand brochures have been broadly distributed, and FMCSA continues to receive requests for additional copies from motor carriers and motorcoach associations.

At the request of the National Transportation Safety Board, FMCSA is updating its "Motorcoach Operator Fatigue" video and developing a dissemination plan. In addition, FMCSA initiated a targeted outreach campaign to faith-based organizations that hire buses or drivers for group events. Products under development include brochures, e-mail blasts, and banner advertising.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS CONSUMER COMPLAINT TELEPHONE HOTLINE

The FMCSA continues to support the toll-free Household Goods Consumer Complaint Telephone Hotline and related Web sites to receive, monitor, and address consumer complaints, and provide information about the transportation of household goods. In calendar year 2009, the hotline received 2,177 complaints. As of April 12, 2010, the hotline had received 856 complaints.

Household Goods Consumer Complaints

Calendar Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of Complaints	2,272	2,979	2,987	3,300	4,037	2,358	2,177

Source: FMCSA's Household Goods National Consumer Complaint Database

In FY 2010, FMCSA continues to operate the Household Goods Consumer Complaint Telephone Hotline in addition to performing the following activities:

- Ensure all written, telephone, fax, e-mail, and Internet consumer complaints are entered into the Household Goods National Consumer Complaint Database (NCCD).
- Provide general database system maintenance, including activities required to keep the NCCD operational. Examples of such activities include system patches, server software maintenance, and end-user support.
- Maintain the computer-generated letter system that sends routine agency responses immediately back to the consumers filing household goods complaints with FMCSA.
- Notify household goods carriers and brokers regarding a complaint, if the complainant authorized FMCSA to release complaint information. By doing so, companies will be alerted to problems before they become severe or repetitive and warrant investigation and possible enforcement action.
- Inform consumers, carriers, and brokers in hostage load situations of their rights and responsibilities.
- Identify and target for investigation and appropriate enforcement the most egregious household goods carriers and brokers violating the commercial regulations.
- Develop and distribute pamphlets, posters, and other educational materials.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS CONSUMER INFORMATION PROGRAM

An estimated 40 million households move each year – approximately 1.6 million of these move across State lines. There are approximately 4,800 active household goods carriers and 500 active household goods brokers registered with FMCSA. While most household goods moves are conducted without incident, a significant number leave consumers dissatisfied, overcharged, or without their personal possessions. As a result, FMCSA increased its enforcement and outreach efforts to protect the public from illegal activities and deceitful business practices by dishonest moving companies and brokers.

The transportation of household goods continues to be challenging. This is, in part, because individual shippers (i.e., consumers) are typically less knowledgeable about regulations and motor carrier responsibilities, and are more susceptible to misunderstandings, false promises, and fraud. The FMCSA Household Goods Consumer Information Program goal is to improve the level of consumer protection and awareness of consumers' rights and responsibilities.

In June 2005, FMCSA launched its *Protect Your Move* Web site (www.protectyourmove.gov). The Web site provides information for consumers to plan a successful household goods move and to avoid becoming a victim of moving fraud. There have been more than 19 million hits on the Web site since its launch. The average daily hit rate is 11,138 visits.

During the first 5 months of FY 2010, there were nearly 1.2 million Web site hits, with an average daily hit rate of nearly 8,000. These figures have not changed significantly compared to the same period last year, with 1.2 million Web site hits and 7,900 hits on average per day. The average visit lasted 18 minutes for the first 5 months of FY 2010, which was slightly higher than the 17-minute average visit length recorded for the same period last year.

The Agency is in the planning stages for a public service announcement regarding household goods consumer rights and protections.

OTHER INITIATIVES

The FMCSA completed a video directed toward educating cargo tank drivers. This 16-minute video reminds these drivers of the special characteristics of driving this type of vehicle and transporting these commodities. The video was provided to registered cargo tank carriers and is available on the Agency's Web site for download.

SUMMARY

The FMCSA is committed to providing outreach and education activities that support DOT's strategic safety objectives and the Agency's goal of reducing crashes and crash-related injuries and fatalities by preventing and minimizing the severity of truck and bus crashes. The Agency continues to plan, fund, and implement programs that combine both education and enforcement to reduce traffic injuries and fatalities associated with large truck and bus crashes.