Employer Fact Sheet on Teen Safety Belt Use

- Teenage safety belt usage rates from observational and crash-involvement studies consistently show lower use rates compared to older adults. Surveys indicate from observations that teens wear safety belts at rates 5 to 15% less often than most older adult age groups. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) data indicates that over a five-year period, 57% to 60% of teens who died in passenger vehicles were unbelted.

- According to a NHTSA survey, teen drivers are less likely to wear a safety belt “all the time” (79%) than older drivers (84%).

- Teens were also more likely to agree that a crash close to home was usually “not as serious” (30%) and that wearing a safety belt makes them “worry more about being in an accident” (27%).

- Teen focus groups indicate that they are aware of the “Click It or Ticket” Campaign. Fear of enforcement was the only reason some could offer for wearing safety belts.

- Research has shown that teens do not have enough accurate information about the value of wearing safety belts.
  - Many of them don’t understand how effective seat belts are. About one-half (47%) of 16-20-year-olds reported they agreed that safety belts “were as likely to harm as to help,” compared to 34% of those 21-64.
  - They do not know that it is dangerous to ride in the back seat unbelted.

- Teens are curious about what happens in a crash, but they seem to believe that adults do not trust them with the facts.

- Teens tend to underestimate risks of driving and crashing, and exhibit an “optimistic bias.” They do not think they will get into a crash, so they do not think they need protection if they are involved in a crash.

- Research has shown that many pickup truck drivers, including teens, feel like they are just safer in their trucks than in a car, but they are not. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) research shows that pickup trucks in fatal crashes roll over twice as often as passenger cars. Ejection is the most common cause of injuries and fatalities in rollover crashes. Seat belts reduce the risk of dying in a pickup truck rollover crash by up to 80%.