

## Maine Change to Primary Evaluation

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## Nighttime Belt Use & Primary Law Upgrade

- Higher Fatal Crash Risk at Night
- Belt Use lower at Night
- Passage of a Primary Belt Law May have a Greater Effect on Night Belt Use than Day Belt Use (see Masten, 2007)

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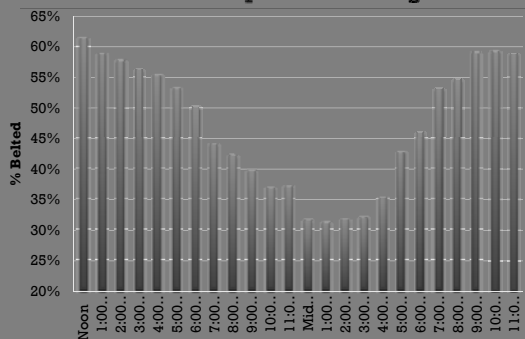
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Percent Belt Use Fatally Injured Front Seat Outboard Occupants of Passenger Vehicles



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### Maine's Change to Primary

- The new primary belt law in Maine went into effect as of September 20, 2007
- Educational grace period to April 1, 2008.

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### Three Part Evaluation

- Police Focus Groups.
- Awareness Surveys.
- Seat Belt Observations.

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### Evaluation Schedule

- Three Waves of Evaluation
  - Pre Primary Enforcement (February/March 2008)
  - Post Primary Enforcement (April/May 2008)
  - Post Click It or Ticket (June 2008)

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### Police Focus Groups

**Topics included:**

- Level of participation in enforcement mobilizations.
- Description of enforcement under secondary law.
- Changes in enforcement activity / tactics.
- Police opinion about the law change.
- Motorists' reaction to the law change (as perceived by members of the police force).

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### BMV Awareness Surveys

- All Three Waves.
- One-page questionnaire.
- Once the survey was completed, respondents dropped it in a survey box.

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### Evaluation Elements

**• Seat Belt Observation Surveys**

- Day & Night in 40 Site Mini-Subsample of Statewide in 10 counties throughout the State.
- Daytime observations took place between 7:00 a.m. and 5:45 p.m.
- Nighttime observations started at 9:00 p.m. and ended at 4:00 a.m.

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### Results

**Police Focus Groups Pre Enforcement**

- Most departments report making primary stops and issuing warnings.
- Overall more aggressive enforcement of the seat belt law.
- Departments very positive about the law.

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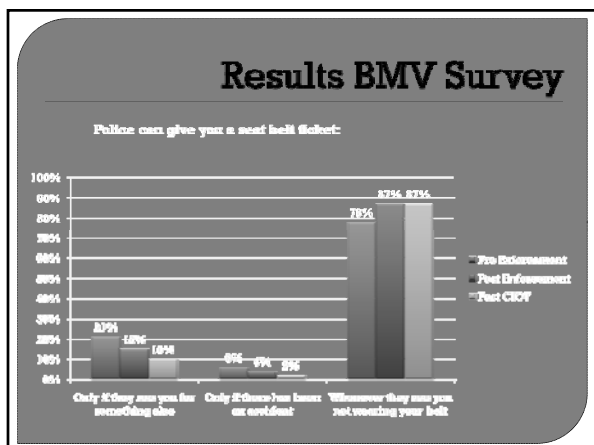
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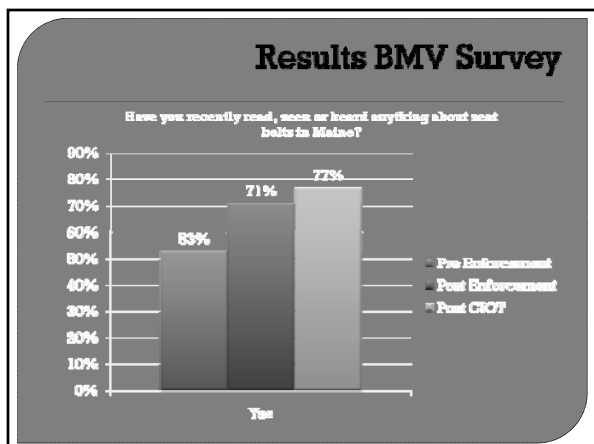
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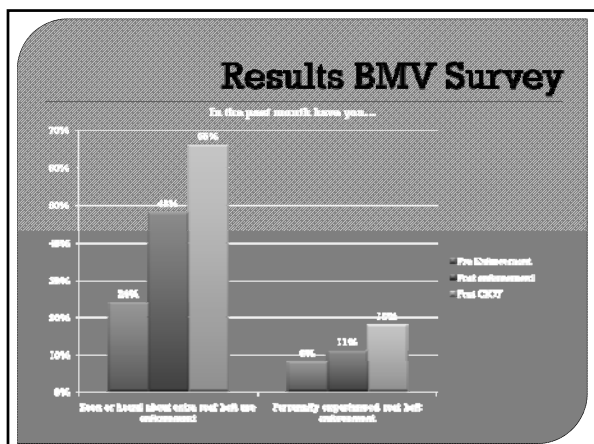
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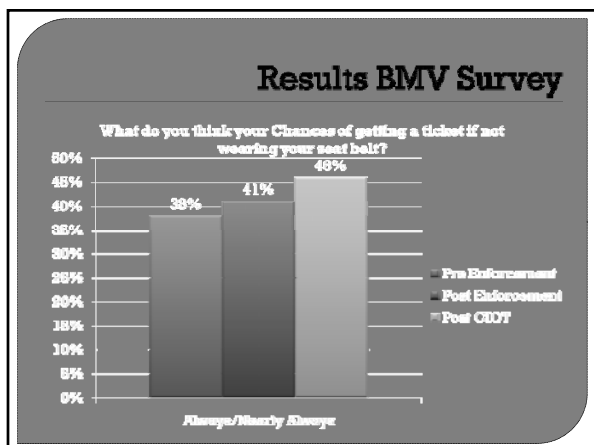
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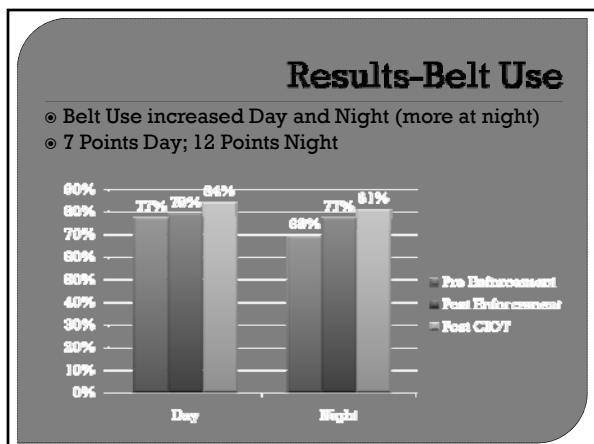
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### Results-Daytime Belt Use

Belt use at daytime during Wave 3 (83.8%) was significantly higher than belt use at daytime in Wave 1 (76.9%) and Wave 2 (79.2%).

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### Results-Night Belt Use

Belt use at night during Wave 3 (81.2%) was significantly higher than belt use at night in Wave 1 (69.3%) and Wave 2 (76.9%).

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### Discussion-Focus Groups

- Law enforcement supports the change to primary.
- Actively enforce the law.
- Feel motorists were buckling up more following the law change.

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### Discussion-Surveys

- ◉ Motorists were aware of the law changes.
- ◉ Knew about the consequences of the law change.
- ◉ Knew that police could issue a ticket upon observation of the seat belt violation alone.

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### Discussion-Belt Use

- ◉ Belt use increased each Wave.
- ◉ Daytime belt use increased especially after HVE campaign.
- ◉ Nighttime belt use increased.
- ◉ Nighttime belt use showed a greater increase.

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### Discussion-Fatalities

- ◉ In recent years average fatalities/year=124
- ◉ When primary law change in place for full year-lowest number of fatal crashes occurred-97

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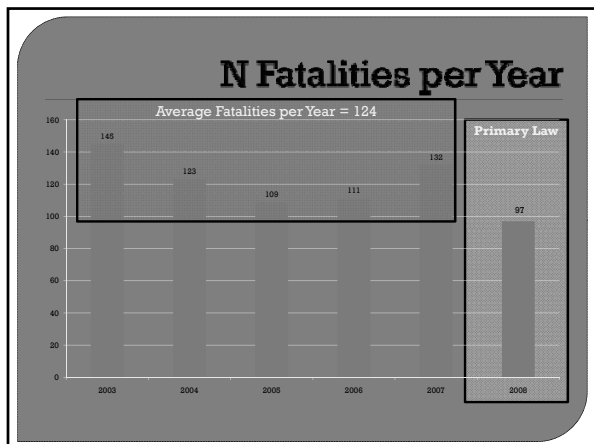
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### Discussion-Overall

- Change from secondary to primary raised overall seat belt use.
- Raised belt use more at night.
- Future research-effects of primary law upgrades on specific groups of night drivers including drinking drivers.

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