

MONTANA SAFE KIDS SAFE COMMUNITIES

“Saved By the Belt” Award Nominating Procedure

PURPOSE:

Due to the dramatic number of fatalities and incapacitating injuries as a result of motor vehicle crashes and non-seat belt use, Montana Safe Kids Safe Communities instituted the “Saved by the Belt Award” Program. This program honors and recognizes individuals involved in crashes that were saved because they were wearing a seat belt. It is hoped that communities around the state will promote seat belt use by using positive reinforcement in the way of awarding “saved” individuals for their good behavior, to in turn, encourage others to do the same.

PROCEDURE:

1. Local Safe Kids Safe Communities Coalitions, Endorsement for Enforcement Communities, Law Enforcement and others committed to this project may participate.
2. Coordination of efforts in nominating an eligible individual is crucial to the integrity of the program and should be overseen by a local Safe Kids Safe Communities Coordinator where applicable (see list of local SKSC Coalitions at www.hmhb-mt.org).
3. a. Collaborate with local Law Enforcement to identify potential survivors of crashes that are approved by the Law Enforcement Investigating Officers. This involvement is paramount to eliminate rewarding individuals of crashes where alcohol involvement, reckless driving, or vehicular assault/homicide violations were cited. However, concerning other citations, it is important to keep in mind that the purpose of this program is to reward people for wearing their seat belt, **not** for being perfect drivers.

b. Collaborate with the local hospital(s) in the area to notify the grant administrator if a patient arrives at the hospital that meets the criteria of the program. The nominator can then forward the name to the Law Enforcement and the investigating officer for the crash can determine if the individual should be nominated for the award.

4. Once the Law Enforcement investigating officer determines an individual is eligible, the Saved by the Belt nominating form should be completed by the investigating officer and can be faxed or mailed to: (Nominating form can be printed off www.hmhb-mt.org).

Patricia Carrell, State Coordinator
Safe Kids Montana

Montana Safe Kids Safe Communities
at Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
1235 Birch Street - Suite 1
Helena, MT 59601

FAX: 406.449.3703

Phone: 406.449.8611

Email: pcarrell-hmhb@qwest.net

Web site: www.hmhb-mt.org

The local Safe Kids Safe Communities Coordinator will need to decide how to recognize the selected individual(s). The awards should be presented at a press conference, luncheon or breakfast program, or any other event the grant administrator wishes to organize, ideally with the investigating officer participating, as well as, any other local VIPs and SKSC coalition members.

5. For press conferences, lunch or breakfast programs, the following are suggestions for organizing the program:
 - a. Invite the survivors and ask each individual if they would like to speak at the program to share their experience and how the crash impacted their lives. Personal experience is a powerful tool in promoting seatbelt use.
 - b. Invite public officials in the community to attend the program. Judges, commissioners, insurance representatives, law enforcement, community organizations, business leaders, hospital personnel, prehospital personnel, fire officials. Most importantly, make sure news media for television; newspaper and radio are in attendance. They can report on the program to the general public not in attendance.
 - c. Choose several individuals to speak on behalf of seatbelt use and why it is important. It helps if these individuals are dynamic and articulate so that their message is well received by the audience.
 - d. Keep the program interesting and relatively short.

SUMMARY

By coordinating the efforts of collaborating organizations, the "Saved by the Belt" Award is becoming a well-recognized event throughout Montana. It is anticipated that this increased public awareness will have the effect of causing more people to wear seat belts, which will result in a decrease in traffic injuries and fatalities.