

## **THE OUTREACH AND EDUCATION 2012 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)  
June 2013

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 is responsible for regulating the safety of commercial motor vehicle (CMV) travel in the United States. Its primary mission is to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving large trucks and buses. To accomplish its mission, FMCSA relies on strong partnerships with its stakeholders.

The FMCSA also actively pursues increased outreach and education initiatives to promote safe operation and the best highway practices for CMVs 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." In addition, FMCSA provides information about the transportation of household goods in interstate commerce to increase public awareness and prevent consumers from becoming victims of moving fraud.

Through this document, FMCSA is reporting on the following initiatives completed or underway in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012: (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, (5) the Household Goods Consumer Information Program, and (6) the Distracted Driving Program.

### **TICKETING AGGRESSIVE CARS AND TRUCKS PROGRAM**

TACT is a program model that involves high visibility traffic enforcement and outreach and education components conducted by States and localities to promote safe driving behavior and reduce crashes between CMVs and passenger vehicles. While TACT has been listed in previous annual reports as a part of FMCSA's Outreach and Education efforts, the program has become a standard component of FMCSA's grant-supported enforcement activities funded through the Agency's Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program grants.

## **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, and safety and law enforcement organizations. In FY 2010, FMCSA 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 in 2010, according to the 2010 Safety Belt Usage by CMV Drivers Survey, a national survey sponsored by the Agency. The overall safety belt usage rate for drivers of all medium- and heavy-duty trucks and buses rose from 65 percent in 2007 to 78 percent in 2010. This represents a 20 percent increase in safety belt usage over a four year period. The usage rate for other passengers in a CMV also increased from 57 percent in 2007 to 64 percent in 2010. This represents a 12 percent increase in safety belt usage among other passengers over the same four year period.

Currently the Safety Belt Usage by CMV Drivers Survey is conducted biennially due to increased costs associated with conducting the study. The most recent study overview is located at [http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/safety-security/7768\\_FMC\\_SeatBeltReport\\_v5\\_042011-508.pdf](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/safety-security/7768_FMC_SeatBeltReport_v5_042011-508.pdf).

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 website, located at [www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetybelt](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetybelt), dedicated to communicating information on how to increase safety belt use among this population. The website 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 Agency regularly distributes "*Be Ready. Be Buckled.*" outreach and education materials (e.g., posters, fact sheet, brochure) at trade shows and events for use by safety advocates, the general public, and industry partners. The FMCSA also promotes CMV safety belt usage through a national children's art contest with results featured on the CMV Safety Belt website at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety-security/safety-belt/index.htm>.

## **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 to reduce injuries, crashes, and fatalities. The commercial motorcoach industry transports approximately 750 million passengers annually in the United States. While motorcoach travel is one of the safest forms of commercial passenger transportation, fatal motorcoach crashes are tragic events that affect the families and co-workers of victims in addition to the lost lives. The

Passenger Carrier Safety Outreach Program provides regulatory, safety, and educational information to the public and industry in a variety of formats, ranging from an interactive website to informational brochures.

The FMCSA redesigned the consumer area of the passenger carrier website to make it easier to use. The web page, located at [www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety-security/PCS/Consumers.aspx](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety-security/PCS/Consumers.aspx), includes an interactive system for individuals and groups to find safe and appropriate interstate passenger transportation in their area. It provides current, easy to understand safety information about interstate passenger carriers nationwide. This system is useful to school districts, churches, and other groups seeking safe commercial bus transportation.

On July 22, 2011, over 115,000 faith-based organizations were informed via e-mail of a new brochure entitled “Bus Trips Carry Precious Cargo.” The brochure provides guidance to organizations about what to know and do when hiring or chartering a CMV for group travel or operating an owned CMV for group travel. The brochure is available on FMCSA’s website and was also included in the National Motorcoach Safety Summit press kit.

The DOT and FMCSA hosted a National Motorcoach Safety Summit on September 23, 2011, in order to increase awareness of the importance of motorcoach safety and to energize and empower stakeholders, partners, and the public to take personal responsibility in making motorcoach transportation safer. The Summit was preceded by four regional roundtable events held in August 2011 that covered a variety of motorcoach safety topics. All recommendations from the Summit were documented, and a report is available online. The information from the Summit provided valuable input for updating the Department’s Motorcoach Safety Action Plan. The webcast of the summit is available on FMCSA’s website at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety-security/PCS/motorcoach-safety.aspx>.

The informational document entitled “Think Safety: Every Trip, Every Time” was featured on the FMCSA website in seven additional languages including Chinese (both Simplified and Traditional), French, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The document helps consumers review a bus company’s safety record, safety rating, and operating authority status before buying a ticket or hiring a bus company for group travel. Between October 1, 2011, and September 3, 2012, the “Think Safety Passenger Carrier” brochure was downloaded 2,285 times.

The SaferBus app, a free downloadable iPhone/iPad application (app), became publicly available on March 20, 2012. The SaferBus app provides a quick and easy way to “look before you book” your next bus trip. The app provides search capability and access to FMCSA’s safety records on nearly 6,000 for-hire interstate passenger carriers operating in the United States. The outreach effort to promote awareness of the app included the Secretary of Transportation’s announcements and blogs, press releases on DOT’s and FMCSA’s websites, and an article in *Guardian* magazine (a quarterly publication for State enforcement personnel). In addition, an informational e-mail about the SaferBus app was sent to over 95,000 recipients on June 21, 2012, including religious organizations, civic and social organizations, colleges and universities, secondary schools, and travel planners.

On May 1, 2012, FMCSA announced the Motorcoach Safety Data Utilization Student Challenge. The Challenge is a contest for student software developers to use the Agency's raw performance data on commercial bus companies to create new apps and online solutions that enable consumers to make smart safety decisions when booking their bus travel. Submissions were accepted through January 31, 2013, with winners scheduled to be announced on March 15, 2013. However, no qualified entries were received.

The FMCSA launched a new passenger carrier complaint interface on the National Consumer Complaint Database (NCCDB) website on December 12, 2012. The new interface enhances the user's options by adding a specific complaint filing section for bus and motorcoach passengers. Users will be able to file a complaint about a violation to a safety, disability, or service-related law or regulation. The FMCSA will promote public awareness of the new interface after its launch through outreach efforts.

### **HOUSEHOLD GOODS CONSUMER COMPLAINT TELEPHONE HOTLINE**

The FMCSA continues to support the toll-free Household Goods Consumer Complaint Telephone Hotline and related websites to receive, monitor, and address consumer complaints, and provide information about the transportation of household goods. In FY 2011, the hotline received 2,392 valid complaints. In FY 2012, the hotline received 2,551 valid complaints. The increase is most likely due to partnerships with government and State agencies utilizing NCCDB to upload complaints.

#### **Household Goods Consumer Complaints**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Number of Complaints</b>	2783	2879	2764	2627	2470	1909	1902	2392	2551

Source: FMCSA's Household Goods NCCDB. Total validated household goods complaints only.

In FY 2012, FMCSA continued to operate the Household Goods Consumer Complaint Telephone Hotline in addition to performing the following activities:

- Ensuring all written, telephone, fax, e-mail, and Internet consumer complaints are entered into the Household Goods NCCDB.
- Providing general database system maintenance, including activities required to keep the NCCDB operational. Examples of such activities include system patches, server software maintenance, and end-user support.
- Maintaining the computer-generated letter system that sends routine agency responses immediately to the consumers filing household goods complaints with FMCSA.
- Notifying 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.
- Informing consumers, carriers, and brokers in hostage load situations of their rights and responsibilities.

- Identifying and target for investigation and appropriate enforcement the most egregious household goods carriers and brokers violating the commercial regulations.
- Developing and distribute pamphlets, posters, and other educational materials.

### **HOUSEHOLD GOODS CONSUMER INFORMATION PROGRAM**

An estimated 45 million households move each year—approximately 1.6 million of these move across State lines. On September 28, 2012, there were approximately 4,436 active household goods carriers compared to 4,702 during the same period in 2011, representing about a 6.0 percent decrease. There were approximately 744 active household goods brokers registered with FMCSA on September 28, 2012, compared to 788 during the same period in 2011, representing a 5.5 percent decrease. 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. Some of the outreach efforts include the establishment of an Enforcement Partnership Program where State agencies partner with FMCSA to enforce Federal regulations and statutes. In addition, the Household Goods Working Group and the newly formed Moving Fraud Working Group provide a platform to share ideas and strategies to combat moving fraud.

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 May 2012, FMCSA launched its new and improved *Protect Your Move* website ([www.protectyourmove.gov](http://www.protectyourmove.gov)). The website provides information for consumers to plan a successful household goods move. The two new features added to the website were the Moving Fraud Prevention Checklist and the FMCSA Spotlight. The Moving Fraud Prevention Checklist provides information to the consumer on steps to take to prevent becoming a victim of moving fraud. In September 2012, the document was made available in nine languages (e.g., English, Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, simplified Chinese, and traditional Chinese). The FMCSA Spotlight is updated regularly and highlights useful information to assist the consumer during their relocation experience in a concise format. Additional tools were added to the website to assist the consumer when problems arise. They include information on next steps when shipments are taken hostage, loss and damage of the shipment, and disputes with the mover. The FMCSA continues to protect and educate consumers with innovative ideas, new programs, and resources.

The public's awareness of the Protect Your Move website is growing. During FY 2012, there were 9,829,373 website hits compared to 6,299,002 for FY 2011. This represents a 56 percent increase. The average daily hit rate for FY 2012 was 26,856 compared to a daily hit rate of 17,257 for the same period of FY 2011. This represents a 67 percent increase in the number of daily hits to the website. The average visit during FY 2012 lasted nearly 12 minutes, which was unchanged compared to the same period last year. The page views for FY 2012 were

1,842,750 compared to 860,075 for the same period last year, an increase of 114 percent. The Agency is optimistic that this increased awareness will help improve the public's understanding of their rights and responsibilities during a household goods move. The FMCSA public service announcement regarding household goods consumer rights and protections is still available on at <https://www.protectyourmove.gov>.

### **DISTRACTED DRIVING PROGRAM**

The DOT has taken the lead in eliminating distracted driving nationwide. As part of this effort, FMCSA participated in the "One Text or Call Could Wreck It All" consumer outreach campaign. This initiative focused on the driving public and sought to increase awareness concerning the dangers of using mobile devices while driving. In support of this effort, decals featuring the campaign theme were made available to organizations with CMVs. The FMCSA asked the CMV industry to embrace the effort to reduce distracted driving by displaying these decals on commercial vehicles. A total of 7,273 truck decals were distributed to CMV Safety Belt Partners.

The FMCSA conducted a photo session on January 26, 2012, with the Commercial Vehicle Training Association to highlight the "One Text or Call Could Wreck It All" truck decal campaign in support of Secretary LaHood's distracted driving initiative. On February 7, 2012, Secretary LaHood's Fast Lane blog, as well as other industry blogging sites, posted stories featuring the truck decal campaign.

On May 3, 2012, the Agency launched the Distracted Driving webpage featuring fact sheets, frequently asked questions, and other information concerning the no texting and mobile phone restriction rulemakings. These materials were designed to create awareness and provide vital information about each rulemaking in plain English. The webpage can be found here at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rules-regulations/topics/distracted-driving/overview.aspx>.

### **SUMMARY**

The FMCSA is committed to providing outreach and education activities that support DOT's strategic safety objectives and the FMCSA's goal of reducing crashes and crash-related injuries and fatalities by preventing and minimizing the severity of truck and bus crashes. The FMCSA 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. In addition, FMCSA provides information to increase public awareness concerning transportation of household goods in interstate commerce to prevent consumers from becoming victims of moving fraud.