

BUPA SEAT BELT ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIES

Interview Techniques to increase Seat Belt Citations

Effective seat belt enforcement in PA's secondary law environment can be done, and done at a high level. Buckle Up PA is introducing several new techniques and strategies to enhance law enforcement's ability to detect and take action on vehicle occupants who are unbelted.

Your agencies policies ultimately will decide if any or all strategies are appropriate for your jurisdiction, and your primary concern should always be for the safety of motoring public and your officers.

New Seat Belt Strategy: *Interview Techniques to increase Seat Belt Citations*

The level of success of a seat belt stop sometime depends not only upon the thoroughness of the officer's observation of the primary and secondary violations or their ability to articulate the reason for the stop in court, but on the occupant's admission that they were unbelted at the time of the stop.

Officers may also benefit from information on interviewing skills designed to elicit information from the violator regarding use or non-use of seat belts. Information from the violator regarding use or non-use of seat belts can provide officers with substantial corroborating evidence.

Providing training and then reviewing these techniques during a pre-event briefing can enhance an officer's level of confidence and provide for higher levels of seat belt enforcement.

The arresting officer should start with non-confrontational approach and pose questions in ways to limit the chances for a person to present false information. The officer **should never ask** "*Were you wearing your seat belt*", if affords the offender a better opportunity to be untruthful.

An example to confirm the observation of a seat belt violation, an officer could inquire, "*Was there a reason for not wearing your seat belt?*" This question or similar questions have been quite successful in eliciting truthful responses from seat belt violators.

