

FDOT DISTRICT TWO COMMUNITY TRAFFIC SAFETY PROGRAM



Occupant Protection: Building a Culture of Buckling Up

Ground Zero for Target Zero

The **Community Traffic Safety Program (CTSP)** plays a critical role in the Florida Department of Transportation's future and serves as a connection to local communities in Northeast Florida. We are committed to traffic safety and Target Zero to reduce **traffic fatalities and serious injuries** on our local roadways.

The **Community Traffic Safety Teams (CTSTs)** cover **18 counties in District Two**. These teams, made up of local advocates, agencies, and stakeholders, work together to identify and address roadway hazards, risky driving behaviors, and engineering concerns.

CTSTs meet regularly and take a **multi-jurisdictional, data-driven approach to traffic safety**. Through collaboration, our team members solve traffic safety concerns to make our roadways safer. They combine resources for education campaigns, special events, and problem-solving initiatives. The teams tackle engineering and safety issues, distribute safety materials, and promote awareness efforts.

This overview showcases our community education and engagement efforts on occupant protection, aligned with **Florida's Strategic Highway Safety Plan**. By fostering a **traffic safety culture** and uniting key stakeholders, we can **improve safety belt use, prevent crashes, and save lives**.

"Bringing You Home Safely" since 1994

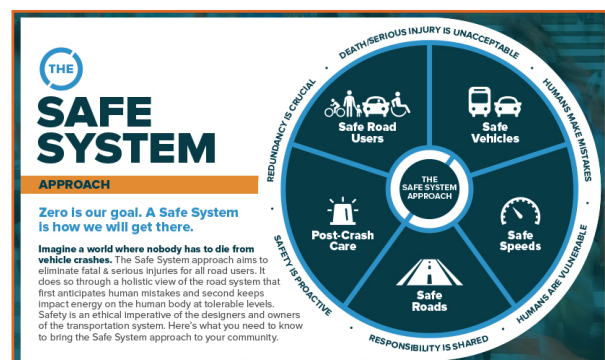
For 32 years, our community-based traffic safety program has provided effective solutions to local crash problems. Our tagline, "**Bringing You Home Safely**," aligns with Target Zero's mission: "Everyone has something to get home to." Our Traffic Safety Teams, spanning all 18 counties in District Two, continue making a real impact. We collaborate and solve local traffic safety concerns through education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency services.

Advancing Safety Through the Safe System Approach

The **Federal Highway Administration's Safe System Approach** offers a comprehensive strategy for reducing severe and fatal injuries from vehicle crashes. This holistic framework acknowledges human error while ensuring that impact forces remain within tolerable limits to protect roadway users.

Safety is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders, including system users, designers, and transportation agencies. As part of our commitment to a safer and more accessible transportation network, CTST meetings focus on the Safe System Approach principles and its five core elements, exploring their role in preventing crashes and mitigating injury severity.

Andrea Atran, M.A., CPM,
FDOT District Two
Community Traffic Safety Program Manager



FDOT DISTRICT TWO CTSP OCCUPANT PROTECTION



Occupant protection is a cornerstone of the FDOT District Two Community Traffic Safety Program (CTSP). Since 1994, our 18-county region has consistently reinforced the message that **buckling up is the single most effective action a driver or passenger can take to prevent serious injury or death in a crash.** Our approach positions safety belt use not only as a legal requirement, but as a daily habit and a “safe lifestyle” that protects families, communities, and futures.

A Shared Commitment to Promote Occupant Protection – District Two’s CTST members, agencies, local partners, schools, colleges, and businesses join our grassroots efforts, displaying “Buckle Up” messages across Northeast Florida. Here are a few of examples:



The City of Williston in **Levy County** promotes buckling up.



Buckle Up banners displayed by **Department of Health in Lafayette County** at all schools in Mayo.



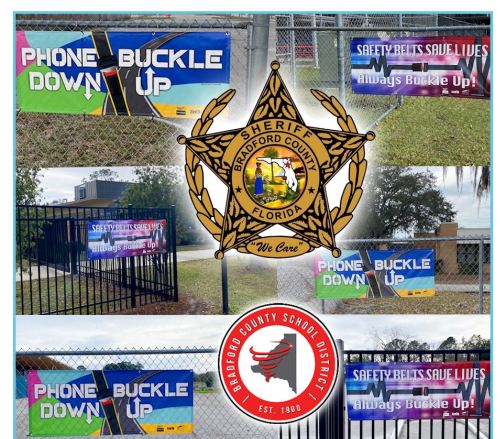
Local businesses in **Suwannee County** promote safety belt use.



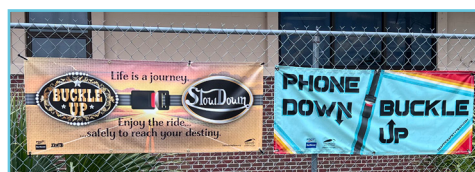
Hamilton County students and sport teams remind peers to always buckle up and drive safe.



St. Johns County Sheriff's Office and Palm Valley Academy want you to arrive safely.

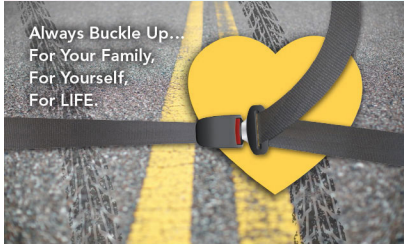


Bradford County Sheriff's Office placed occupant protection banners at their six local schools to remind, parents, and faculty staff to buckle up.



Buckle Up messages outside of the **Columbia Department of Health.**

FDOT DISTRICT TWO CTSP OCCUPANT PROTECTION



No Regrets When You BUCKLE UP

- Wear your seat belt for every ride.
- Buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash.
- Secure children in the proper child safety seat.
- Safety belt use isn't just a good idea, IT'S THE LAW.



Funded by FDOT
trafficsafetyteam.org

PHONE DOWN↓ BUCKLE UP↑

Core Messaging & Campaigns – Occupant protection efforts are unified under clear, memorable calls to action, such as **“Always Buckle Up... For Your Family, For Yourself, For LIFE”** and **“No Regrets When You BUCKLE UP.”** Complementary initiatives, such as **“Phone Down / Buckle Up,”** **“Safety Belts Save Lives,”** and **“Buckle Up and Slow Down”** address behavioral risks that often coincide with non-use of restraints, reinforcing a culture of responsibility behind the wheel.

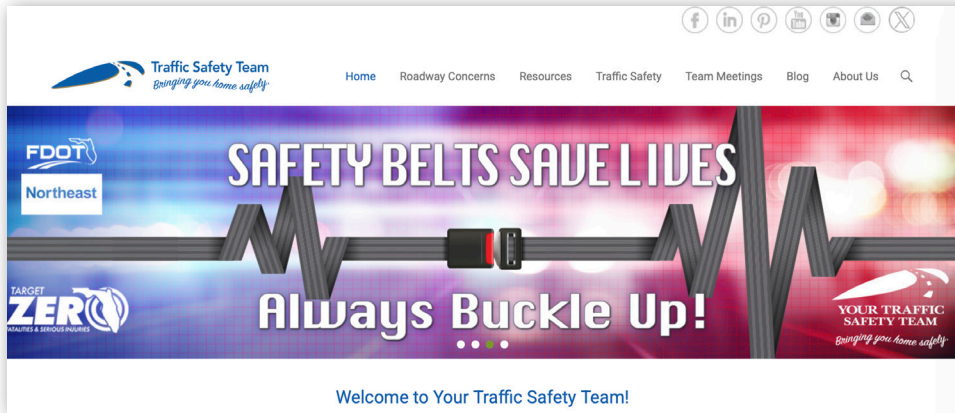
Targeted Safety for High-Risk Roadways & Populations –

District Two addresses that

much of our 18 counties are rural. We have tailored occupant protection messaging to address specific risk environments and demographics. Materials such as **“Be Tough Enough to Buckle Up”** and **“Buckle Up in Your Truck”** underscore this focus.



FDOT DISTRICT TWO CTSP OCCUPANT PROTECTION



Outreach Online – We share traffic safety resources and impactful graphics through our website and social media channels. Occupant protection is a year-round focus, with seasonal “Buckle Up” messaging regularly featured across our platforms. TrafficSafetyTeam.org highlights occupant protection through dedicated safety pages, homepage features, and a library of free, ready-to-use graphics that partners can download, print, and share. It is encouraging to see the positive reach of these efforts across District Two, Florida, and beyond. Here are some examples of our most popular occupant protection web pages and social media posts.



TrafficSafetyTeam.org



@TrafficSafetyTeam



@TrafficSafetyFL

LinkedIn Top Posts by Engagement



Seat belt safety starts with YOU. If you buckle up, your family and friends are more likely to do the same. Not buckling up could cost you a ticket... or your life. Click It. Don't Risk It. #BuckleUpFL #ClickItOrTicket <https://lnkd.in/eiPnfcgu>

50% engagement rate

Instagram Top Posts by Engagement



We really click! Safety belts save lives... Share the love and buckle up for every ride. #BuckleUpFL #BuckleUpLove #ValentinesDay <https://trafficsafetyteam.org/seasons-of-safety/>

42.86% engagement rate

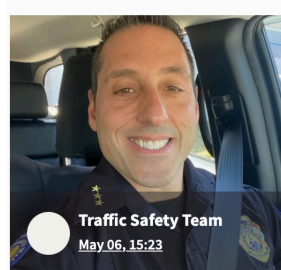
Top posts



Safety is a state of mind, and everything is better when you live the life of a safe driver. Enjoy the journey and reach your destiny! #TheLifeOf #SafeDriver #TrafficSafetyFL <https://trafficsafetyteam.org/slow-down/>

599 views

Top posts



🚗 We buckle up! Do YOU? Take the challenge: Wear your seatbelt every single time you get in a vehicle. Your life matters—click it every trip! 🙌 Huge thanks to our amazing Traffic Safety Team members who participated in the #SeatbeltSelfie contest! 🏆 Shoutout to Anthony Ferris from the Columbia Department of Health for the most selfies—and to

4,585 views

X Top Posts by Engagement



Be tough enough to BUCKLE UP. Slow down. Drive safely. Make it home to the people who count on you. #BuckleUp #ClickItOrTicket #PickupTruck #RuralRoads #DriveSafe #TrafficSafetyFL #TargetZeroFL #FDOT #NortheastFlorida #TrafficSafetyTeam <https://trafficsafetyteam.org/traffic-safety/rural-driving/> <https://twitter.com/trafficsafetyfl/status/1644444444>

50% engagement rate

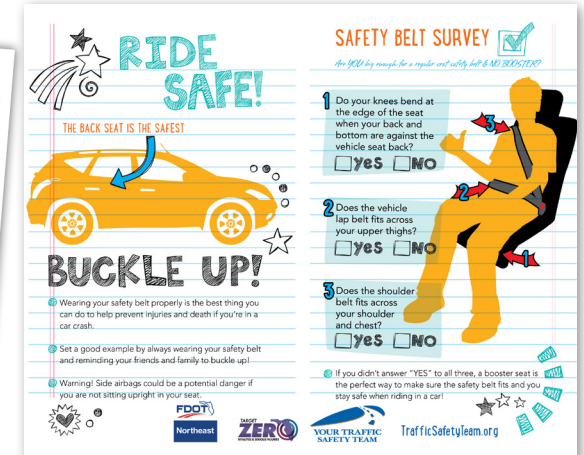
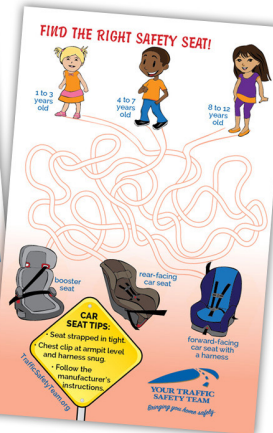
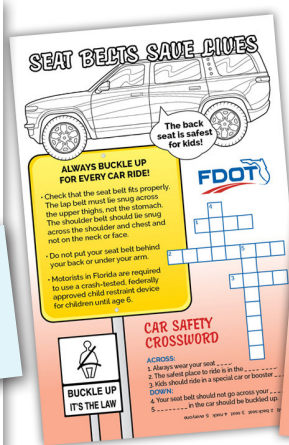
FDOT DISTRICT TWO CTSP OCCUPANT PROTECTION



Child Passenger Safety & Youth Education – In addition to adult driver outreach, FDOT District Two integrates occupant protection into early education and family engagement. Through **Child Passenger Safety initiatives**, including our **statewide W.H.A.L.E. Check program**, educational materials, and guidance on proper child restraint, the program ensures that children are secured correctly and that parents and caregivers understand best practices from the earliest years of travel.



This commitment is further supported by the District's **Traffic Safety for Kids** outreach, which uses age-appropriate activity books, bookmarks, and classroom-friendly materials to build lifelong habits which are shared by team members and community partners.



Community Outreach & Materials Distribution – To make occupant protection visible and accessible, we produce a wide range of free materials like posters, banners, pop-up displays, tip cards, activity books, and bookmarks, which are provided at local agencies, schools, libraries, businesses, community centers, and at public events. We also provide digital graphics, videos, and social media resources that partners can share in their newsletters, emails, and on their websites and social networks. These efforts help ensure buckling up reminders are seen repeatedly where people live, work, learn, and travel.

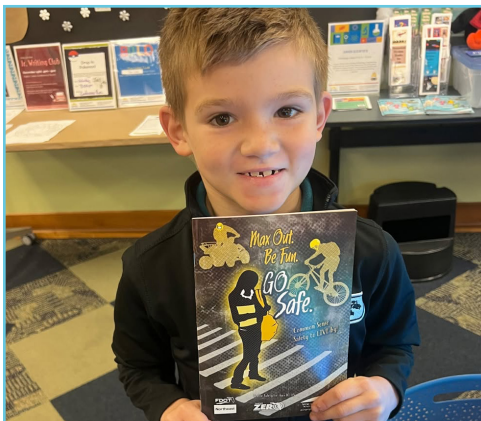
FDOT DISTRICT TWO CTSP Florida OP Assessment Responses Area: Outreach and Education

Materials and resources for occupant protection education, including those directed toward at-risk populations –

Child Passenger Safety: The **W.H.A.L.E. Check** program was first introduced in May of 2002 in Jacksonville, Florida, by Northeast FDOT District Two's Community Traffic Safety Program. This is a child passenger safety program we have made available **statewide** for parents and caregivers. Since 2021, we have shipped **55,404 W.H.A.L.E. Check flyers** to team members, fire rescue and law enforcement stations, daycare facilities, the Department of Health, and partners.



First Christian Academy shared *WHALE Check* with their preschool students and families during "Meet the Teacher" time!



Blue Zones Project Jacksonville in Duval shares our activity books at their youth traffic safety events! They can also be found at local fairs, libraries, schools, and more.



Traffic Safety for Kids and Families: We have been producing multi-topic traffic safety activity books for kids with targeted occupant protection messages since the late 1990s. The materials were also made in a digital format for sharing. Just since 2021, we have **distributed 245,840 activity books** in Northeast Florida.



Madison County High School's Cowboys and Cowgirls reminded students to buckle up!

Occupant Protection for Teens: We share materials for Teen Safe Driving Classes and courses. We developed short videos with driving tips for teens and all motorists. Made series of brief educational and informative traffic safety messages including one on buckling up available to share during *National Teen Driver Safety Week*, the *100 Deadliest Days for Teen Drivers* during the summer, and all year long.

The **Battle of the Belts** competition encourages teens to buckle up through peer engagement and friendly rivalry. Originally launched in Columbia County by FDOT District Two and local law enforcement partners, this year's challenge was won by Fort White High School over Columbia High School. In Alachua County, UF Health Shands Trauma Services hosted its first Battle of the Belts competition, where P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School earned the highest overall seat belt use rate and became the inaugural champion over Gainesville and Buchholz High Schools.



Rural Occupant Protection: More than 14 years ago, we introduced our first rural occupant protection tip cards to encourage seat belt use on Northeast Florida's rural roadways. Since then, these materials have remained a valuable outreach tool. In the last year alone, we distributed **17,788 new buckle-up tip cards** and **5,220 posters and banners** throughout District Two.

Hurricane Storm Effects in District Two:

Rural communities face unique challenges, including long travel distances, limited resources, and the ongoing impacts of hurricanes. Unlike many natural disasters that last days or weeks, hurricane recovery can continue for months or even years. Damage to roads, schools, public facilities, and law enforcement operations can make safety outreach more difficult, particularly in rural areas that are often among the hardest hit. Despite these challenges, we remain committed to providing education, resources, and reminders that help keep residents safe and encourage everyone to buckle up.

(See article reference on the following page.)



After Three Hurricanes in 13 Months, Residents of Cedar Key, Florida, Are Considering the Island's Future—and Their Own

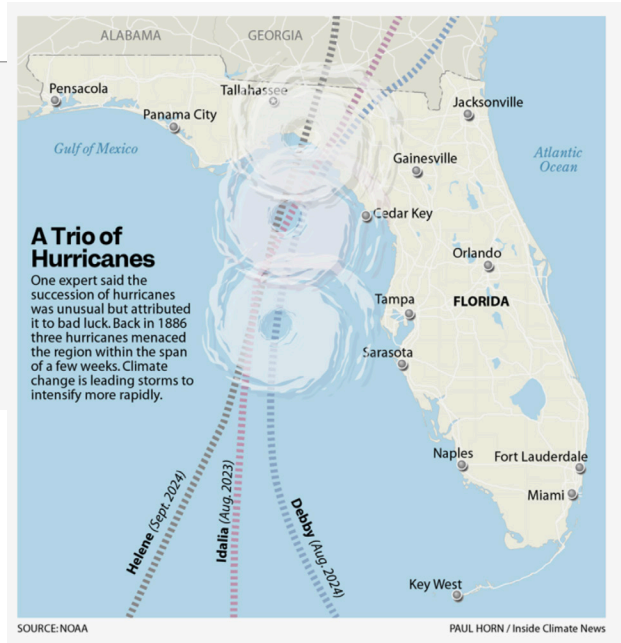
Storms left the small community facing an enormous reconstruction effort. What will the town look like—and who will be there—when the work is done?



By Amy Green
January 5, 2025



Large piles of debris remained in Cedar Key, Fla., some two months after Hurricane Helene hit. Credit: Amy Green/Inside Climate News



CEDAR KEY, Fla.—Timothy Solano could feel the dread rise within him as he sat with his wife and three young children in the family's Cadillac Escalade on the two-lane causeway leading into this island fishing village on Florida's Gulf Coast.

Floodwaters had left the road ahead impassable, and Solano, a clam farmer for the family-owned business his father established nearly 30 years ago, could only speculate about the damage lying beyond what he could see.

Overnight, Hurricane Helene had swirled ashore some 95 miles northwest of here as a massive, fast-moving category 4 storm, packing winds of up to 140 miles an hour. In the waning days of September, the hurricane would carve a vast swath of destruction from Florida to western North Carolina, causing catastrophic flooding across southern Appalachia.

For Cedar Key, Helene was the third hurricane in 13 months. Idalia made landfall near here in August 2023 as a category 3 hurricane; about a year later, Debby hit the region as a category 1 storm. Milton would strike southwest Florida a mere 13 days after Helene as yet another category 3 storm, although that system would cause only minimal impacts in this part of the state.

Helene was the most catastrophic for Cedar Key. On some parts of the island, the hurricane unleashed a storm surge of at least 12 feet. Some residents still were rebuilding from Idalia when Debby passed over, and they were cleaning up from Debby when Helene arrived.

This extraordinary succession of hurricanes has left the tiny island village with an enormous reconstruction effort and an existential crisis. The future that collectively had been imagined by residents here, based on previous environmental patterns, effectively has been washed away, and a vision for what's next has yet to gain consensus.

Can Cedar Key rebuild and still retain the old charm? Can it stand apart from other coastal areas characterized by towering condos? In the wake of the storms, how can the community understand the future storms and sea level rise that are inevitable? Could it be a place where people can make over the community? The key to the town's fate can be found in the resilience of its residents.

News article example of hurricane devastation to communities.

Read full story online: <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/05012025/cedar-key-florida-three-hurricanes-in-13-months/>

Additional evidence, information, resources, and downloadable materials may be found online on our [TrafficSafetyTeam.org](https://trafficsafetyteam.org) website:

<https://trafficsafetyteam.org/traffic-safety/rural-driving/>
<https://trafficsafetyteam.org/occupant-protection/>
<https://trafficsafetyteam.org/safety-belt-use-in-northeast-florida/>
<https://trafficsafetyteam.org/traffic-safety/car-seat-crusaders/>
<https://trafficsafetyteam.org/whale-check-program/>
<https://trafficsafetyteam.org/traffic-safety/safety-for-kids/>
<https://trafficsafetyteam.org/national-seat-belt-day/>
<https://trafficsafetyteam.org/duval-occupant-protection/>

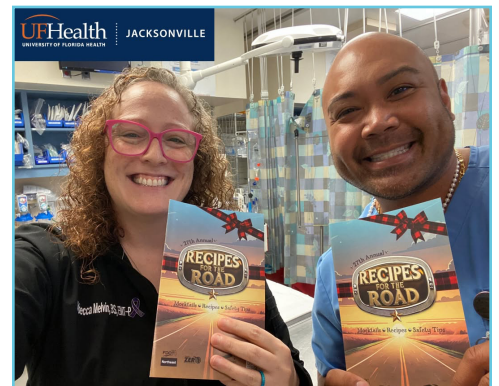


Support for law enforcement mobilization outreach efforts –

The District Two Community Traffic Safety Program offers supplemental resources in addition to our Law Enforcement Liaison's (LEL) efforts. Items include digital content and printed tip cards to law enforcement partners for distribution. Reminders are shared during team meetings, online, and in direct emails to our **296 Northeast Florida law enforcement members** throughout the year.

Public health and hospital systems partnerships to save lives –

The District Two Traffic Safety Teams include members from the Department of Health, some area hospitals, and Safe Kids Northeast Florida. We connect with all **42 Department of Health locations** in our district, and many are excellent partners in continually promoting occupant protection and child passenger safety in their communities. Additionally, we work with all facets of Emergency Services, which is part of the 4-Es of traffic safety, including **206 Fire Rescue stations**, to distribute or display occupant protection reminders.



Traffic safety and occupant protection education in schools –

The District Two Community Traffic Safety Program supports traffic safety, child passenger safety, and occupant protection education through partnerships with schools, colleges, libraries, safety fairs, touch-a-truck events, and community outreach in Northeast Florida. We help reach all ages, from young children to high school students and adult learners. Team members participate in the annual *Battle of the Belts* program and driver education courses, encouraging teens to always buckle up.

Our education outreach network across **all 18 counties** includes:

- **460 K-12 Schools**
- **449 Daycare Centers and Early Learning Facilities**
- **56 School Resource Officers**
- **25 College and University Campuses:** Flagler College, Florida Gateway College, Florida State College at Jacksonville, Jacksonville University, Santa Fe College, St. Johns River State College, University of Florida, University of North Florida



• 68 Public Library Branches in District Two

Since 1999, we have partnered with local libraries and schools to promote traffic safety education. For more than 27 years, we have provided materials to bookmobiles and neighborhood library branches, helping reach families and underserved populations throughout the region. In the past five years alone, we have distributed **132,577 bookmarks and activity cards** featuring traffic safety, occupant protection, and child passenger safety messages. Learn more online at: <https://trafficsafetyteam.org/traffic-safety-bookmarks/>

Additional community outreach partners –

Building relationships with local community partners is essential to encouraging drivers and passengers to buckle up, promoting safer driving behaviors, and reducing crashes on our roadways. To expand traffic safety outreach across Northeast Florida, we strengthened existing partnerships and connected with new agencies and community groups beyond traditional channels, including:

- **25 Chambers of Commerce**
- **44 Tax Collector Offices**
- **67 Service Clubs** (American Legion Posts, Elks Lodges, Moose Lodges, and VFW Posts)
- **184 Churches**

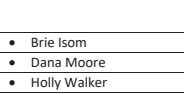


Evidence: The following are sample agenda and attendees from a recent Duval Traffic Safety Team meeting, and example of occupant protection resources and crash data from Signal4Analytics provided from Alachua/Dixie/Gilchrist/Levy/Madison/Taylor and the Columbia/Hamilton/Lafayette/Suwannee Traffic Safety Team meeting packages:

Duval

Meeting #5 • May 20, 2026 • 10:00 am

Previous Meeting Summary



**YOUR TRAFFIC
SAFETY TEAM**

Bringing you home safely

- Meeting Call to Order
- Attendees

• Andrea Atran	• Brian Wallace	• Brie Isom
• Brien Marx	• Christine Aronow	• Dana Moore
• David Jadlocki	• David Suarez	• Holly Walker
• Lee Durbin	• Matt Fall	• Philip Mazzo
• Rebecca Melvin	• Tanner Pletzke	• Thalia Fuste
• Tyler Blair	•	•

- Engineering Roadway Concerns

Issue	New	Open	Closed
2980: Normandy Blvd & Herlong Rd: Requesting signal timing review.			X
2989: SR 9A & Town Center Pkwy: Issues with the merging on-ramp.		X	
2995: US 17 & St. Johns Ave: Safety Study.		X	
2999: Old Middleburg Rd N & Memorial Park Rd: Student crossing concerns.			X
3000: SR 21 & US 17: Maintenance request for deterioration and drop offs.			X
3001: Beach Blvd & Brougham: Construction project causing issues in bike lane.			X
3006: Gate Pkwy & Vlg Xing Dr: Bicycle and Pedestrian concerns.			X
3007: Big Island Dr & Town Center Pkwy: Bicycle and Pedestrian concerns.			X
3010: SR 21 & St. Johns Ave: Requesting traffic signal.		X	
3013: Beach Blvd & Windmaker Way/Lucena Ln: Requesting traffic signal.		X	
3019: Argyle Forrest Blvd & Staplehurst Dr: Stop sign has been knocked down.	X		

- Public Information and Construction Updates
 - See [NFLRoads.com](https://www.nflroads.com)

- CTST Coordinator's Report
 - Click It or Ticket
 - Commercial Vehicle Crash Data Fact Sheets
 - Safe Streets for All and Grant Recipients

- Meeting Adjourned



TrafficSafetyTeam.org






[@TrafficSafetyTeam](https://www.facebook.com/TrafficSafetyTeam)






[@TrafficSafetyFL](https://www.facebook.com/TrafficSafetyTeam)





District Two Traffic Safety Resources • Materials • Reports

YOUR TRAFFIC SAFETY TEAM
Bringing you home safely



Order activity books for kids here





Occupant protection materials available here



FDOT TrafficSafetyTeam.org @TrafficSafetyTeam @TrafficSafetyFL

District Two Traffic Safety Resources • Materials • Reports

YOUR TRAFFIC SAFETY TEAM
Bringing you home safely

Occupant Protection

Occupant Protection | Jacksonville, FL | FDOT District 2 CTST

One Click Does The Trick

Occupant Protection Safety Message: "Always Buckle Up... For Your Family, For Yourself, for LIFE." No Regrets When You BUCKLE UP

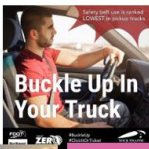
As part of our "No Regrets When You Drive With Care" traffic safety campaign, these seat belt safety tip cards are easy handouts as quick reminders to always wear your seat belt.

- Wear your seat belt for every ride.
- Buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash.
- Secure children in the proper child safety seat.
- Safety belt use isn't just a good idea, IT'S THE LAW.

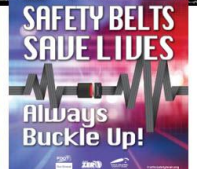
A variety of tip cards have been distributed through all of our 18 counties in Northeast Florida District Two. They include our buckled up heart, family buckled up, "Buckle Up Religiously; and a rural "Be Tough Enough to Buckle Up!"

Safety belts save lives! Wear your safety belt across your shoulder and your waist. By law, front seat drivers and passengers AND backseat passengers under age 18 MUST wear a safety belt in Florida!



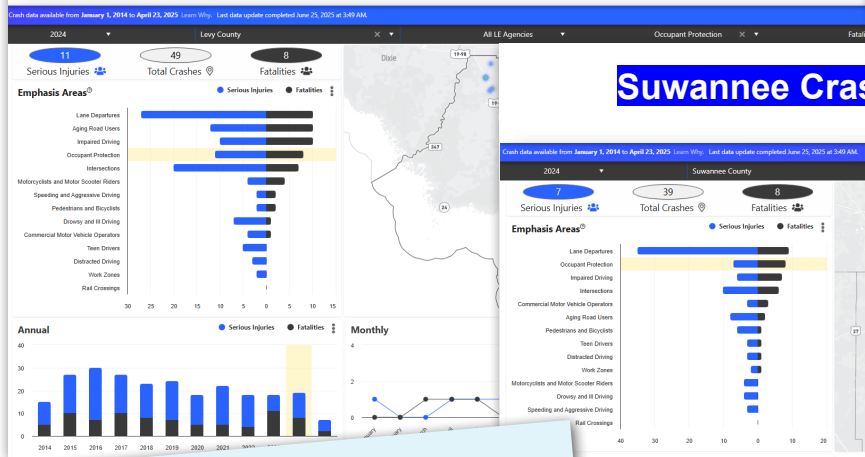




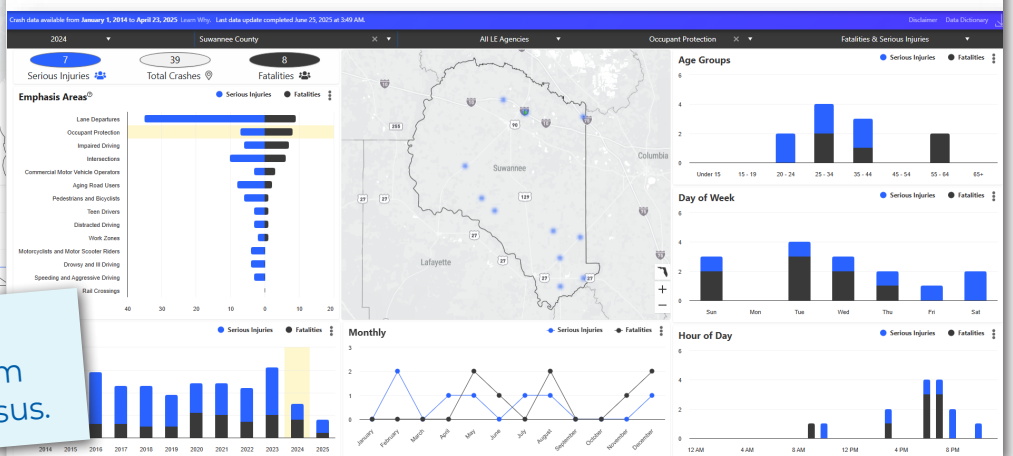
FDOT TrafficSafetyTeam.org @TrafficSafetyTeam @TrafficSafetyFL

Levy Crash Data – Occupant Protection



Estimated population of Levy is **48,520**. Up from 42,915 during the 2020 Census.

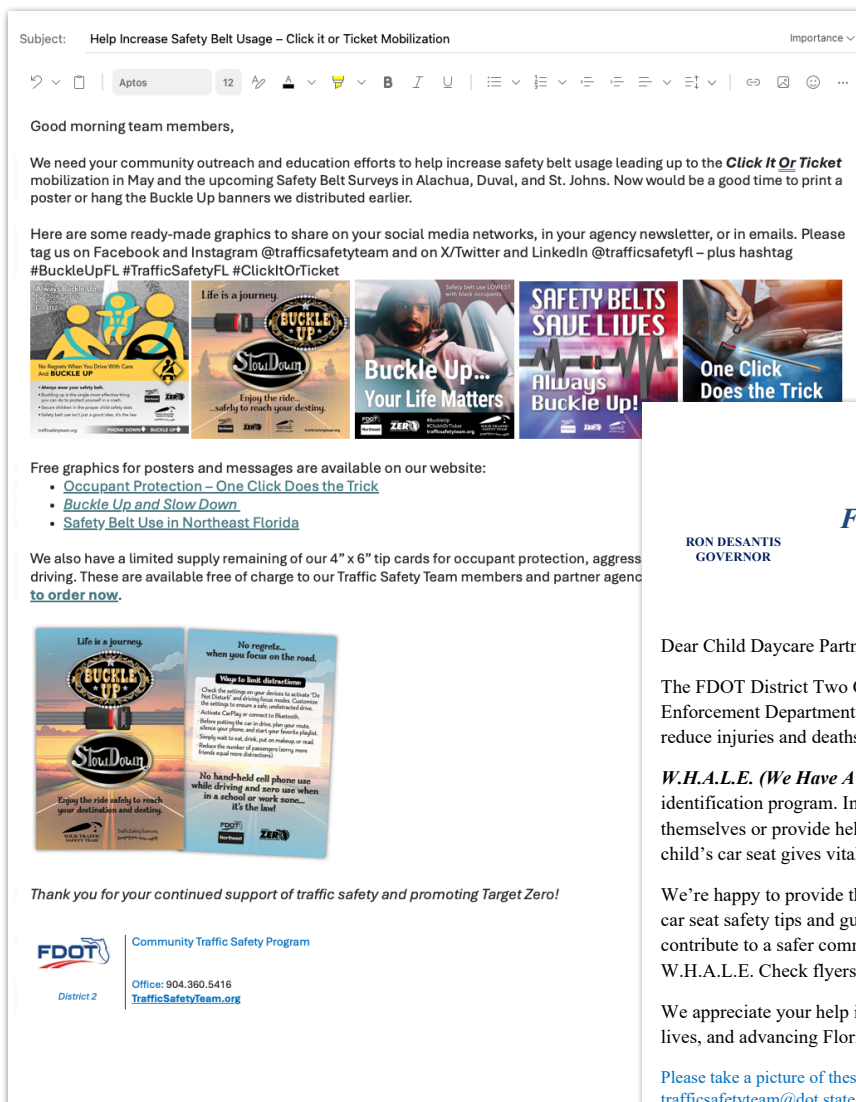
Suwannee Crash Data – Occupant Protection



Estimated population of Suwannee is **48,149**. Up from 43,474 during the 2020 Census.



Additional evidence and information: To maintain consistent and productive engagement with our partners and agencies, we distribute more than **56,000 emails and outreach letters annually**. These communications support initiatives such as *Click It or Ticket* mobilizations, child passenger safety materials to Fire Rescue Departments, school-based traffic safety education, and other occupant protection efforts. We also publish a digital **Annual Report** and **Traffic Safety Talk newsletters**, which highlights program updates, partner activities, resources, and safety campaigns. The following are sample outreach letters, parts of our 2024 annual report, and newsletter pages featuring occupant protection-related content. Complete document archives are available online:
<https://trafficsafetyteam.org/traffic-safety-talk-newsletter/>
<https://trafficsafetyteam.org/2024-annual-report-with-crash-data/>



RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR



JARED W. PERDUE, P.E.
SECRETARY

Dear Child Daycare Partners,

The FDOT District Two Community Traffic Safety Program recognizes the pivotal role that local Law Enforcement Departments play in supporting families. By working together, we can significantly reduce injuries and deaths on roadways, safeguarding our most precious cargo.

W.H.A.L.E. (We Have A Little Emergency) Check is a child passenger safety education and identification program. In the event of an automobile crash, children are often too young to identify themselves or provide helpful information. Completing and attaching a *W.H.A.L.E. Check* label to the child's car seat gives vital information to emergency personnel.

We're happy to provide the enclosed complimentary flyers for your daycare families, which include car seat safety tips and guidelines. By distributing these, you promote child passenger safety and contribute to a safer community. Please use the QR codes below to order additional copies of these W.H.A.L.E. Check flyers, activity books for young kids, and buckle up reminders at no cost.

We appreciate your help in sharing these materials. Your support in promoting traffic safety, saving lives, and advancing Florida's Target ZERO vision is invaluable.

Please take a picture of these flyers with your crew or on display and email them to us at trafficsafetyteam@dot.state.fl.us. Visit our trafficsafetyteam.org/whale-check-program webpage for more information. We also offer a variety of other traffic safety resources that can be utilized for your newsletter, website, or social media channels. Connect with us @TrafficSafetyTeam on Facebook and Instagram.



While supplies last on ordering items.

TRAFFICSAFETYTALK

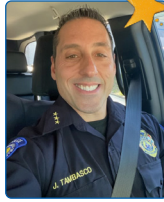
FDOT District Two Community Traffic Safety Program
Target Zero 2025 News Update
Issue 3
TrafficSafetyTeam.org

Seatbelt Selfie Challenge Spurs Safer Habits in District Two

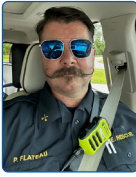
Our community-wide push for 100% seat belt use began with an internal Seatbelt Selfie contest.

Traffic Safety Team members embraced the opportunity to showcase their commitment to buckling up. This fun and impactful challenge helped raise awareness about the life-saving power of a simple click every time you get in the car. When you buckle up in your everyday life, you set a good example for those around you.

We received **36 Seatbelt Selfies** from 28 participants, and sent packages filled with Target Zero merchandise and our sincere thanks.



While everyone who buckles up is a winner in our book, special bragging rights go to **Anthony Ferris with the Columbia Department of Health** for submitting the most selfies. A big congratulations also goes to the Nassau Traffic Safety Team—the District Two winners—thanks to the most submissions from the **Fernandina Beach Police Department**.



Facebook Photos

Check out more photos on our Facebook page: [@TrafficSafetyTeam](https://www.facebook.com/TrafficSafetyTeam)

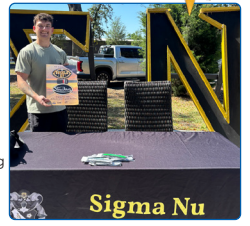


Promoting Traffic Safety with Jacksonville University

Partnering for Safer Roads and Smarter Choices

We are proud to collaborate with **Jacksonville University (JU)** in our continued effort to promote traffic safety and awareness among college students and faculty. Through this partnership, we provided JU with a variety of impactful educational materials, including "Alert Tonight, Alive Tomorrow" light-up reflective backpack tags, "Drive Time is You Time" Target Zero banner stands, and "Buckle Up / Slow Down" banners, posters, and notepads. These resources are now visible across campus, helping to spread critical safety messages in high-traffic areas such as the Frances Bartlett Kinne University Center, the Davis College of Business & Technology, and the security office.

JU's enthusiastic support in displaying these materials and engaging the campus community has been instrumental. From hallways to entrances and student events, the university is helping to make safety visible and memorable. We sincerely thank Jacksonville University for joining us in this important initiative to encourage safe driving habits and save lives.



Sigma Nu



Help Us Promote Child Traffic Safety

Free Materials Available While Supplies Last!

The FDOT Community Traffic Safety Program is proud to support Florida's Target Zero goal by promoting safe travel for our youngest road users. We need your help to reach children, parents, caregivers, and educators across Northeast Florida.

We're offering two fun and educational activity booklets, **Safety Rules—Safety Town** for younger children and **Be Safety Smart** for older kids. Both feature important safety tips covering child passenger safety, pedestrian safety, bicycle and helmet use, and school bus awareness. This is an easy way to support child safety within your network or at your next event.



Order Now



Successful CarFit Event in Orange Park

Our regional **CarFit Technician Training and Checkup Event** in April was a big win for District Two and our communities! We are proud to say we now have **14 new CarFit Technicians** and **9 Event Coordinators** trained. During the public CarFit Checkup Event, 15 cars were "fit" for their drivers. We look forward to seeing how these new technicians/coordinators grow this educational program for drivers locally.

Thank you to the dedicated Traffic Safety Team members who participated and brought such positive energy to the event. We're also grateful to our fantastic partners and agencies for hosting this event with us—the Florida Department of Transportation Safe Mobility for Life Coalition, Clay County Senior Services of Aging True, the Town of Orange Park Police Department, the Orange Park Public Library, and the Orange Park Senior Center. For event details, photos, highlight video, and information about CarFit, visit: <https://trafficsafetyteam.org/carfit/>



Click Here



2024 Florida Safety Belt Survey Report Finalized

We have work to do in Northeast Florida!

Safety Belt Use in Florida 2024



Read More

The 2024 Florida Safety Belt Survey reveals mixed results in Northeast Florida. Alachua County maintained the same 90.6% rate as in 2023, Duval County saw a slight uptick of 0.3 percentage points to 86.5%, and St. Johns County experienced a decrease from 89.3% to 87.5%.

This survey is primarily designed to provide a single safety belt usage estimate for Florida as a whole—not official county rates. However, county-level data can still offer valuable insight into year-to-year trends. Statewide, overall usage rose slightly to 90%, but key disparities remain—especially among pickup truck occupants and certain demographic groups. **Continued focus on local outreach and education is essential to closing these gaps.**

Social Media Spotlight



Fostering a positive traffic safety culture with our "Safety Is a State of Mind" messaging generated strong engagement. Our most popular post, **The Life of a Safe Driver**, received **263 likes and reactions**, and our **Life is a Highway** reel earned **165 likes and reactions** across our social media platforms.



A special thank-you goes out to the following partners for sharing traffic safety messages and tagging us in their social media posts in September, October, and November: **Atlantic Beach Police Department, Bike Walk Jax, City of Jacksonville Beach Police Department, Drug Free Duval, FDOT Northeast Florida, Gainesville Police Department, Get Drivers Ed, J. Fithian Tatem Elementary School PTA, North Florida TPO, and Safe Kids North Central Florida.**

Child Passenger Safety Awareness

This year, we have provided **12,297 W.H.A.L.E. Check** (We Have A Little Emergency) sticker sheets to our Northeast Florida team members, partners, and businesses. They were used throughout the year, during Child Passenger Safety Week, and at car seat checks, community events, local daycare centers, agencies, and hospitals. Visit our website to learn more about **Child Passenger Safety** and download educational resources, social media graphics, and printable activity sheets.

In 2002, the FDOT District Two Community Traffic Safety Program launched **W.H.A.L.E. Check** in Jacksonville, and it has since grown into a statewide initiative with a lasting impact. This program was created to address a critical need. During crashes, children are often too young to identify themselves or share important details. The W.H.A.L.E. Check informational flyer also includes five safety tips to help prevent injuries in case of a car crash and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations to safeguard children in the right car seat.



Ret Tompkins, Assistant Fire Chief, submitted this photo from the **Lake City Fire Department** proudly promoting the **W.H.A.L.E. Check** for Child Passenger Safety.



Staff at the **Columbia DOH** clinic recently discovered that a visiting family was using a makeshift car seat without proper padding or restraints. They were able to provide a proper and safe car seat. What a great opportunity to make a meaningful difference and keep another young passenger protected.

Working Together to Build Safer Communities

Buckling up and driving safely saves lives.

Life is a journey, and every trip deserves to be a safe one. Our Community Traffic Safety Teams continue to promote the simple yet powerful reminders to buckle up, slow down, and enjoy the ride, helping all road users reach their destinations safely and safeguarding the futures that lie ahead.

In 2025, we distributed **22,504 tip cards, posters, and banners** focused on **occupant protection, speeding, and distracted driving**. We extend our appreciation to the numerous partners who helped share this message throughout Northeast Florida. Your commitment to educating the public and elevating traffic safety awareness strengthens our collective effort to build safer, more connected communities.

The **Fernandina Beach Police Department** was honored to be part of the **Fernandina Beach Hispanic Heritage Music & Food Festival** in October. They handed out our **Life is a Highway** notepads and **Target Zero** materials to help ensure everyone makes it home safely!



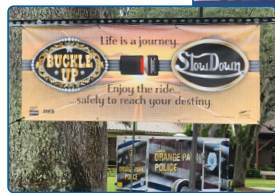
The Town of **Orange Park Police Department** proudly showcases our **Life is a Journey** banner.



Orange Park Elementary is displaying the **Buckle Up and Slow Down** reminder along their entrance.



Beverly Fountain with the **Department of Health Lafayette & Suwannee** placed **Phone Down / Buckle Up** banners at the **Lighthouse Christian Academy** in Mayo and sent one to the **Catholic Charities Bureau** in Lake City.



Learn More

CTSTs Connecting with Our Communities

As we move into 2026, Community Traffic Safety Teams across FDOT District Two continue to strengthen partnerships and expand outreach efforts throughout Northeast Florida. Team members, agencies, and community partners consistently demonstrate their commitment to safer roadways by promoting positive driving behaviors and sharing lifesaving resources.

From community events and school programs to safety fairs and local observances, our partners are helping reinforce the importance of buckling up, slowing down, driving sober, and staying focused behind the wheel.

By engaging students and families with age-appropriate materials and interactive activities, we are helping build lifelong safe habits that extend far beyond the classroom. Thank you to every partner who continues to educate, encourage, and lead by example.



Duval County Public Schools' Be Safe. Be Seen.

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Initiative (January 12-23, 2026) helped reinforce safe walking and biking habits for students at **Highlands Estates Academy** on Jacksonville's Northside. Mrs. **Monique Hernandez** shared that **300 traffic safety activity booklets and bookmarks** were distributed to students who walk or ride their bikes to and from school. She noted the materials arrived in excellent condition and provided invaluable safety information for students and families.



The Columbia County Department of Health

recently participated in a **Community Outreach Day** at **Cedar Park Apartments**, where approximately **50 residents** were displaced by a fire last year. The event brought families together with resources, support services, and family-friendly activities to assist in ongoing recovery efforts.

Our traffic safety activity books were a hit with the kids, providing both fun and valuable safety education. Thank you to the **Columbia DOH** team and community partners for continuing to show up, support residents, and help make safety education accessible during times of need.



Life is a Highway: Motivational and Impactful

What began last year as a limited-release extension of our **Life is a Journey — Buckle Up and Slow Down** campaign gained momentum across Northeast Florida. The **Life is a Highway** traffic safety series features powerful scenic imagery paired with meaningful safety messages that encourage drivers to reflect before they act.



To date, we've distributed:
443 Life is a Highway posters and
11,358 tip cards

A limited supply is still available if you would like to [place an order](#).

Order Now



Partner Spotlight: VFW Post 5968, Orange Park

We have received outstanding feedback from partners and were especially encouraged by this message:

"VFW Post 5968 Orange Park Florida has placed the Florida Department of Transportation Life is a Highway posters on our most important information boards in our highest-traffic areas. We believe in traffic safety and remind our VFW and auxiliary members to be careful on the roads and take care of one another. We support responsible choices and greatly appreciate the posters. They are a friendly reminder to be safe and responsible."
— Russell V. Burch, Post Commander

Thank you to all our partners who continue to display and share these materials as we work together toward safer roads and Target Zero:

AAA
Alachua Police Department
American Legion Posts
Atlantic Beach Police Department
Baker County School District
Bradford County Sheriff's Office
City of Jacksonville
City of Williston
Columbia County Emergency Management
Columbia County School District
Drug Free Duval
Elks Lodges
Florida Department of Health - Alachua, Columbia, Lafayette, Nassau, Putnam, and Suwannee
Florida Highway Patrol
Gainesville Fire Rescue
Gilchrist County Road Department
Gilchrist County School District
Green Cove Springs Police Department
Hamilton County School District
Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
MADD Northeast Florida
Madison County Sheriff's Office
Moose Lodges
Orange Park Police Department
Palm Valley Academy
Putnam County Engineering Department
Putnam County Fire Rescue
Safe Kids Northeast Florida
St. Augustine Beach Police Department
St. Johns County Council on Aging, Public Works, and Risk Management
St. Johns Sheriff's Office
St. Johns County Tax Collector, Driver Ed
Suwannee Valley Transit Authority
Town of Branford
Town of Callahan
Town of Interlachen
Town of Pomona Park
VFW Posts
Webber Infrastructure

Shout out to **American Legion Post 129** in Jacksonville Beach for sharing this traffic safety campaign!



Child Passenger Safety: Lifesaving Impact

Child Passenger Safety (CPS) remains one of our highest priorities across Northeast Florida, and **W.H.A.L.E. Check (We Have A Little Emergency)** continues to make a meaningful difference. In the past year alone, we provided **12,297 W.H.A.L.E. Check** sticker sheets to team members, law enforcement agencies, hospitals, daycare centers, and community partners. These bright, easy-to-use stickers are placed inside a child's car seat and provide first responders with critical emergency contact and medical information when a child may be too young to communicate.

Originally launched in 2002 by the FDOT District Two Community Traffic Safety Program in Jacksonville, **W.H.A.L.E. Check** has grown into a trusted statewide initiative. The program was created to address a real-world safety gap, ensuring that in the event of a crash, vital information is readily available to protect our youngest passengers.

Each **W.H.A.L.E. Check** flyer also reinforces key safety reminders, including American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations for proper car seat selection and use. Correct installation and age-appropriate restraints remain essential to reducing serious injuries and fatalities among children. We encourage all partners to visit our website to access CPS resources, downloadable activity sheets, educational materials, and ready-to-share social media graphics to help amplify this lifesaving message.

Partner Spotlight: Study to Show Learning Academy

A special thank you to **Stephanie Searles**, owner/operator of **Study to Show Learning Academy**, Safe & Secure CPR/AED and First Aid Training in Jacksonville, for sharing photos of **W.H.A.L.E. Check** materials in action.

With the inspiring tagline, "Educating each child from the cradle to the classroom, and keeping them safe and secure," the **Study to Show Learning Academy** embodies what community partnership is all about. By displaying and distributing **W.H.A.L.E. Check** flyers, they are helping families prioritize child passenger safety long before an emergency occurs.

We are grateful to partners like **Study to Show Learning Academy** for helping us move closer to Target Zero, because protecting children on our roadways is everyone's responsibility.





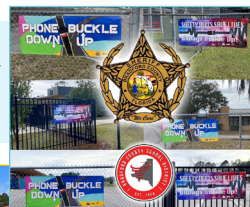
OCCUPANT PROTECTION – A Shared Commitment

With District Two's growing population, occupant protection remains a top priority. Buckling up is the most effective way to stay safe in a crash, yet safety belt use has declined—especially among 16- to 34-year-olds. To encourage safer habits, local partners, schools, colleges, and agencies have joined our grassroots efforts, displaying bold and simple "Buckle Up" messages across Northeast Florida.



St. Johns County Sheriff's Office and Senior Deputy Mark Wilson shared photos of the banners at Palm Valley Academy. Whether you are coming or going, we want you to arrive safely.

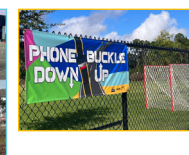
Bradford County Sheriff's Office placed occupant protection banners at their six local schools to remind students, parents, and faculty staff to buckle up and focus on driving.



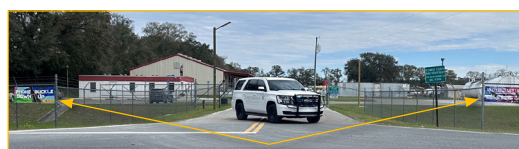
Leaving the student parking lot at St. Johns' Toco Creek High School.



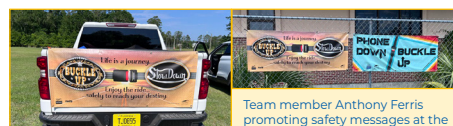
Buckle Up banners displayed by Beverley Fountain with the Department of Health in Lafayette County at schools in Mayo, Florida.



Great spot on SR 17 across from Clay County Sheriff's Office in Green Cove Springs.



Jennifer Joyner with Gilchrist County Road Department attached our banners at both sides of their entrance. They are viewed by all drivers on US Hwy 129 in Gilchrist County.



Team member Anthony Ferris promoting safety messages at the Florida Gateway College (FGC) Health 360 Fair and outside of the Columbia Department of Health.



Bradford County Sheriff's Office posted the Buckle Up / Slow Down banner.

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Special Rural-Focused CAMPAIGN

Life is a journey. Enjoy the Ride... SAFELY!

Young men (18-24) in rural Northeast Florida are overrepresented in fatal crashes due to **speeding** and **low seat belt use**. After research and interviews, we developed a country-style safety message to promote safer driving and distributed **167 banners** and **269 posters**.



We're prioritizing two primary emphasis areas: **occupant protection** and **aggressive driving** in all of District Two's 18 counties. Posters, banners, and bookmarks were displayed and handed out at schools, businesses, agency partners, events, and libraries. These materials support **Click It or Ticket** and **Battle of the Belts** campaigns to help make buckling up and safe speeds the norm on our roads. Visit our [Buckle Up & Slow Down blog](#) for resources, including a **free printable tip card** to share. Together, we are saving lives and ensuring these drivers not only get to their destination but also reach their destiny.



Partners and students like those from **Taylor County High School**, promoted safety belt usage and reducing excessive speeding. **Go Bulldogs!**



City of Williston posted to make buckling up and driving at safe speeds the social norm in Levy County! They have the banners and posters displayed at their local Library and City Hall.



Madison County High School's Cowboys and Cowgirls reminded students to buckle up and slow down to save lives!



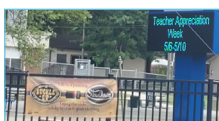
Columbia County Fire Rescue displayed their new banner.



Posters presented by the **Columbia County Sheriff's Office** at **Fort White High School** during District 2's Battle of the Belts!



The **Town of Interlachen** encouraged its community to be better drivers and the **Interlachen Police Department** distributed the safety banners to local schools.



Gainesville Police Department and **A. Quinn Jones Middle School** posted the banner.

FDOT District Two | Community Traffic Safety Program

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CHILD PASSENGER Safety

Safeguarding our most precious cargo!

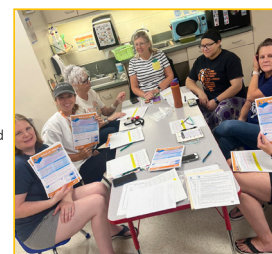
Child Passenger Safety (CPS) continues to be a top priority in protecting our most vulnerable passengers on the road. With a rise in U.S. births in 2021 and Florida's population growing by 1.9% from 2021 to 2022—its most significant increase in years—there is an even greater need to ensure child safety. District Two has seen notable growth in counties like St. Johns (up 24%) and Nassau (up 16.5%) over the past six years. To address this, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Two Community Traffic Safety Program actively educates parents and caregivers about Florida's CPS laws and guidelines.

The **W.H.A.L.E. (We Have A Little Emergency) Check program**, introduced 22 years ago in Jacksonville, is an essential resource that provides critical CPS information, helping to ensure all children are properly secured in crash-tested, federally approved child restraint devices suitable for their size. In 2024, we distributed **30,245 W.H.A.L.E. Check flyers** across Northeast Florida, many of which were used during Child Passenger Safety Week and National Seat Check Saturday.

This community outreach is vital to raising awareness and preventing tragedies, and we are grateful for the support of local partners like the Florida Department of Health, who have been instrumental in spreading the word at local events. As part of our ongoing efforts, we shared the **W.H.A.L.E. Check program** with **467 daycare centers** across District Two's 18 counties, providing educational materials and the opportunity for centers to order more flyers for their families.

In addition, the Putnam Department of Health distributed **W.H.A.L.E. Check** flyers at their Community Baby Shower and other family-oriented events. These outreach opportunities are integral to our mission of reducing child injuries and fatalities on roadways and are a key component of Florida's Target ZERO vision.

The positive feedback from these initiatives reinforces the importance of our collective efforts. All **W.H.A.L.E. Check** materials, including printable flyers and safety tip cards, are available online for easy access, helping ensure families have the resources they need to keep their children safe. Together, we can reduce child injuries and deaths on our roadways and continue making a difference in the lives of our most precious cargo.

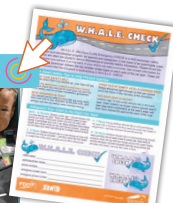


First Christian Academy shared **W.H.A.L.E. Check** with their preschool students and families during "Meet the Teacher" time!

Flashback FAQ
What is the W.H.A.L.E. Check, Child Passenger Safety Program?



Learn More



Outreach with TEEN DRIVERS

Kicking Off Summer with Teen Driver Safety

On June 3, we launched our summer teen driver safety efforts by visiting a **St. Johns County Tax Collector Driver Education Behind the Wheel** course. We shared Target Zero safety messages and reminders, emphasizing the importance of responsible driving. A special thanks to Leah Taylor, SJCTC Driver Education Program Director, for welcoming us into her classroom!



Teen driver programs provide invaluable hands-on experience, helping young drivers build confidence and essential safety skills. These programs play a critical role in combating the 100 Deadliest Days—the period between Memorial Day and Labor Day, known as the most dangerous time for teen drivers.

Kudos to the high school students committed to improving their driving skills, including evasive and recovery maneuvers. We are incredibly grateful for our **community partners, counties, and law enforcement agencies** that make these life-saving programs possible!

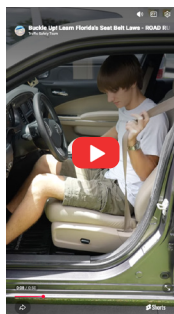


Short Traffic Safety Tips for Teens and All Drivers

In the summer of 2024, we expanded our collection of driving tips videos for teens and all motorists. These brief, educational messages focused on critical traffic safety topics, especially during the **100 Deadliest Days for Teen Drivers**.

As part of the **Operation Southern Slow Down** campaign, we released a new video on **speeding and aggressive driving**, highlighting the dangers of excessive speed and the distance required to stop a vehicle. Additionally, we created a short video explaining **Florida's Hit and Run laws** and the severe risks of fleeing a crash scene. Another popular video covered **Flashing Yellow Arrow Traffic Signals**, which has already gained over 28,000 views since its release on June 24, 2024.

These short videos provide an easy and engaging way to spread essential traffic safety messages during awareness campaigns and year-round. You can find them on our **Driving Tips for Teens** webpage.



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Outreach with COLLEGE STUDENTS

Before Spring Break, we partnered with the **University of North Florida Student Government**, the **UNF Police Department**, and the **Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department** in Duval to encourage safe driving behaviors with students. This pop-up event promoted Target Zero to help eliminate deaths on our roadways. We hope to join forces with more student groups and other departments around the district.



UNF Pop-Up Event

Duval Traffic Safety Team member Karen Livingston with the **UNF Police Department** invited us to participate in a campus event. She set up a **Drunk Google Obstacle Course** and **Walk the Line** for students to try impaired driver simulations using Fatal Vision goggles.



On April 4, we participated in the **Florida State College at Jacksonville Downtown Campus Spring Fling** event. We enjoyed chatting with students about safe driving behaviors, which was a great start to National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. We spoke with many of these younger drivers who were committed to not driving distracted or impaired. They set an excellent example for their peers and want to save lives on the road.



On August 29, we had the opportunity to visit **Flagler College in Downtown St. Augustine** and share important traffic safety and Target Zero messages. Reinforcing good driving habits, like buckling up for every ride and driving safe and sober, was a great start to the fall semester and leading into the Labor Day weekend. In addition to traffic safety pencils, phone grips, and celebrate safely drink coasters, we offered students new tip cards and note pads from our "Life is a Journey... Enjoy the Ride Safely" design.



FDOT District Two | Community Traffic Safety Program

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COMMUNITY Engagements

We love seeing our traffic safety materials in action! Throughout 2024, **Traffic Safety Team members** actively promoted safety at events across District Two. While much of their work happens behind the scenes, their dedication continues to make a positive impact on local communities.

Providing traffic safety resources and educational materials remains a top priority, as **community engagement and outreach** play a vital role in educating drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists—and ultimately, saving lives.



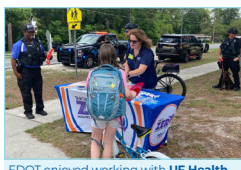
FDOT Target Zero building a safer future with students at **Middleburg Elementary**.



Gainesville Police Department at the City Services Fair shared information about their summer youth programs, explorer program, RADKids, and our traffic safety activity books.



Nassau County Sheriff's Office hosted a hugely successful **Nassau Night Out** event in Yulee.



FDOT enjoyed working with **UF Health** and **High Springs safety partners** for **National Ride and Roll to School Day** at **High Springs Community School**!



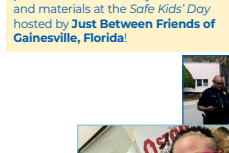
Alachua Police Department provided essential safety information and materials at the **Safe Kids' Day** hosted by **Just Between Friends of Gainesville, Florida**!



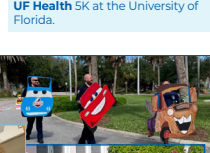
Teen Driver outreach with FDOT Target Zero during the **Children's Miracle Network Hospitals** and **UF Health 5K** at the University of Florida.



Columbia DOH shared our activity books at the **FGC Health 360 Fair**.



UF Health Jacksonville and the **Atlantic Beach Police Department** handed out traffic safety activity books at their **Bike Rodeo Day** and other events.



Robin Price with the **AAA St. Augustine** branch office included our traffic safety materials in their mini-display for **Halloween Safety** this year.

Traffic Safety Educational Events

The **Bradford County Sheriff's Office** had a booth at the **Bradford Agricultural Fair** offering important safety information plus a chance for the kids to win prizes on the Plinko board!



Anthony Ferris and the **Florida Department of Health** continue to educate and promote traffic safety for healthier and happier babies and children. They participated in outreach events at the **Olustee Festival in Baker County** and at the **Columbia County Housing Authority Family Fun Day**!



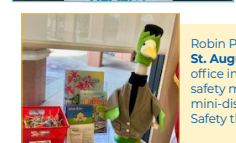
FDOT D2 Target Zero joined with **UF Health Shands Children's Hospital**, **Gainesville Fire Rescue**, and **Gainesville Police Department** for an event focusing on the local homeschool community. Parents and kids got the opportunity to learn essential safety protocols for walking and biking, the importance of helmet protection, and proper car seat safety practices.



Team members with the **Columbia Department of Health** promoting health and traffic safety at **Fort White High School Back to School Bash** held on August 8th.



Team member **Lois Willneff**, Safety Officer, and the **St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners** handed out traffic safety activity books at a **Child Welfare Worker Day** event in September.



Judy Cotton with **MADD Northeast Florida** said the activity books were a big hit with the younger kids at their table during **Trailmark's Boo Bash** in St. Augustine on 10/26/24.

