

**News Release  
For Immediate Release**

## **Saving the Lives of Tweens Parent, Don't Give Up Until They Buckle Up!**

We all know everything is bigger in Texas! However, one number that we do not want to see bigger is the number of children ages 8-14 who are fatally injured in motor vehicle crashes. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), from 2009-2012, a total of 188 children ages 8-14 were killed in motor vehicle crashes. Nationally, among children fatally injured in this age group, an average of 49% were unrestrained; in Texas, however, the rate of unrestrained fatalities was 58%. Parents and caregivers need to work to change this statistic! Seat belts save lives, but NHTSA data show that as children get older, they are less likely to buckle up. The percentage of child passengers who die while riding unrestrained generally increases with age and is most pronounced among 13- and 14-year-olds, regardless of seating position.

NHTSA just announced its first-ever national advertising campaign aimed at parents of children ages 8-14 to make sure their kids are consistently and properly wearing their seat belt every time the car is moving.

“Buckling up is an important habit to instill in children at a young age. As parents, we need to lead by example and reinforce the message to make sure it sticks,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “This campaign urges parents to never give up until their kids buckle up.”

A recent series of NHTSA focus groups found seat belt use can fall by the wayside when shuttling kids to and from school and activities, when running short errands, or when parents are a bit worn down by the daily grind, which makes this campaign urgently important.

“Kids will always test the limits with their parents or caregivers, but there is no room for compromise when it comes to wearing a seat belt,” said NHTSA Administrator Dr. Mark Rosekind. “Sounding like a broken record can save your child’s life. Kids need constant reminders, and this is one that can’t be skipped.”

Tweens test the limits, because it’s how they learn and grow. The focus groups confirmed that it’s critical that they absorb the message that the car doesn’t move until everyone in the vehicle is buckled up. After a while, it won’t be a fight; it will be second nature. And it is a lifesaving lesson that they’ll carry with them always.

Watch for the campaign, which has been developed in both English and Spanish and includes television, radio, outdoor, print and digital ads. The ads take a direct approach to parents. One radio spot says, “You’re the driver. The one in control. Stand firm. Just wait. And move only when you hear the click that says they’re buckled in for the drive.”

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Agent Lilian Mezquida reminds parents that most children are killed in crashes close to home. Keep children buckled up on every trip!