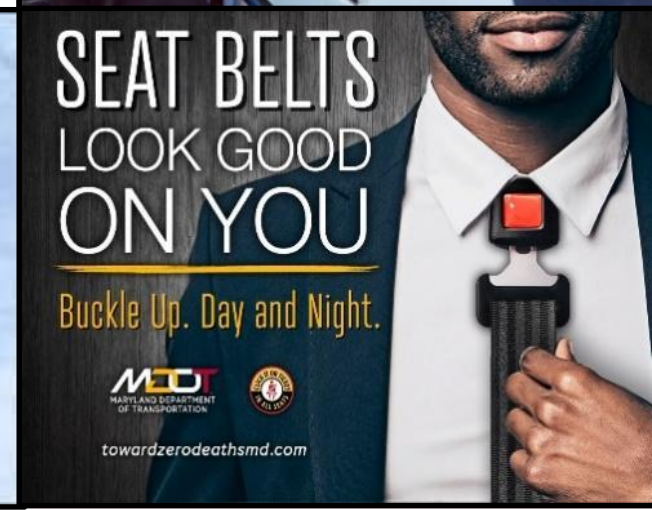


2020 MARYLAND OCCUPANT PROTECTION ASSESSMENT



MHSO Mission

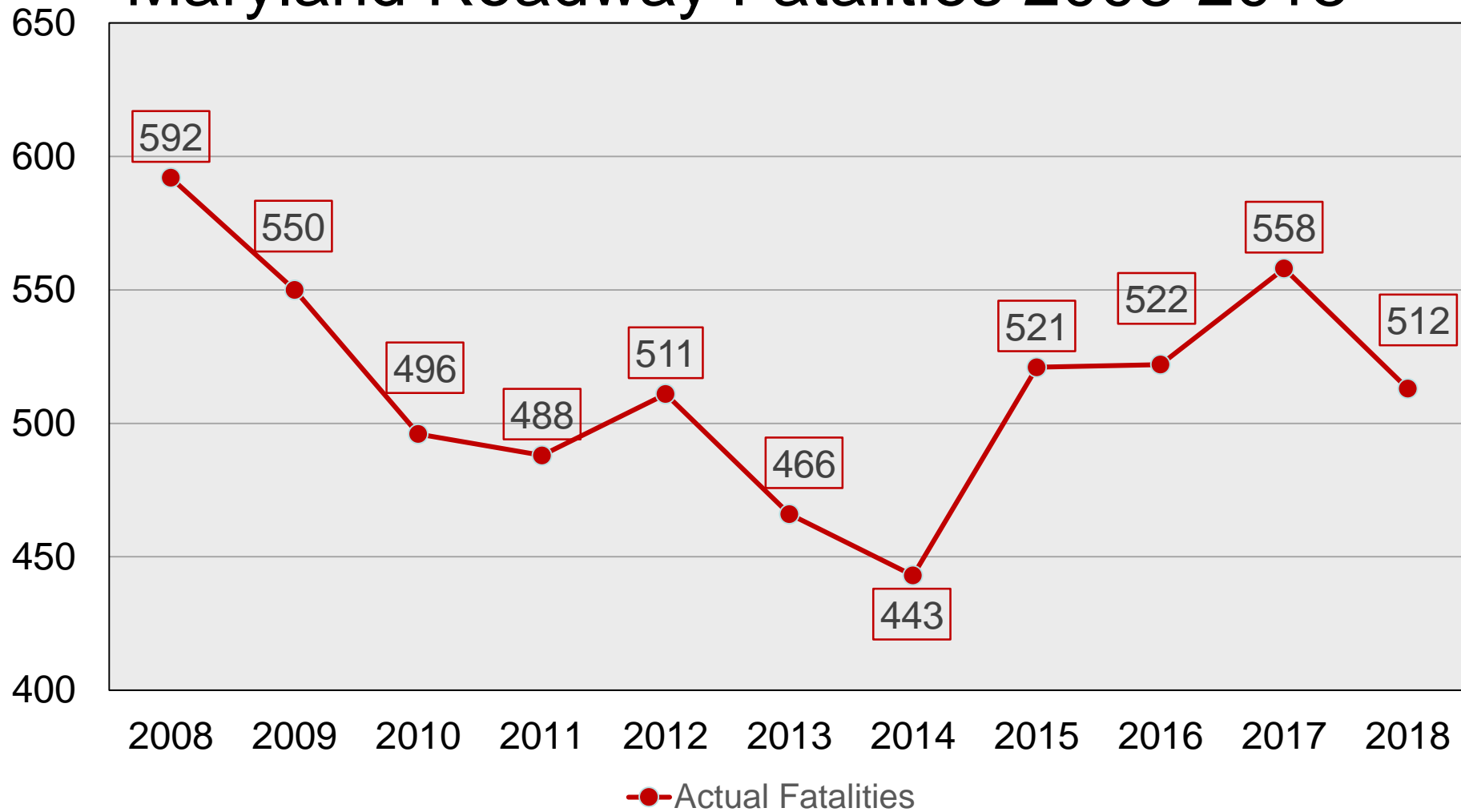
The Maryland Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Office is dedicated to saving lives and preventing injuries by reducing the number and severity of motor vehicle crashes through the administration of a comprehensive and effective network of traffic safety programs.



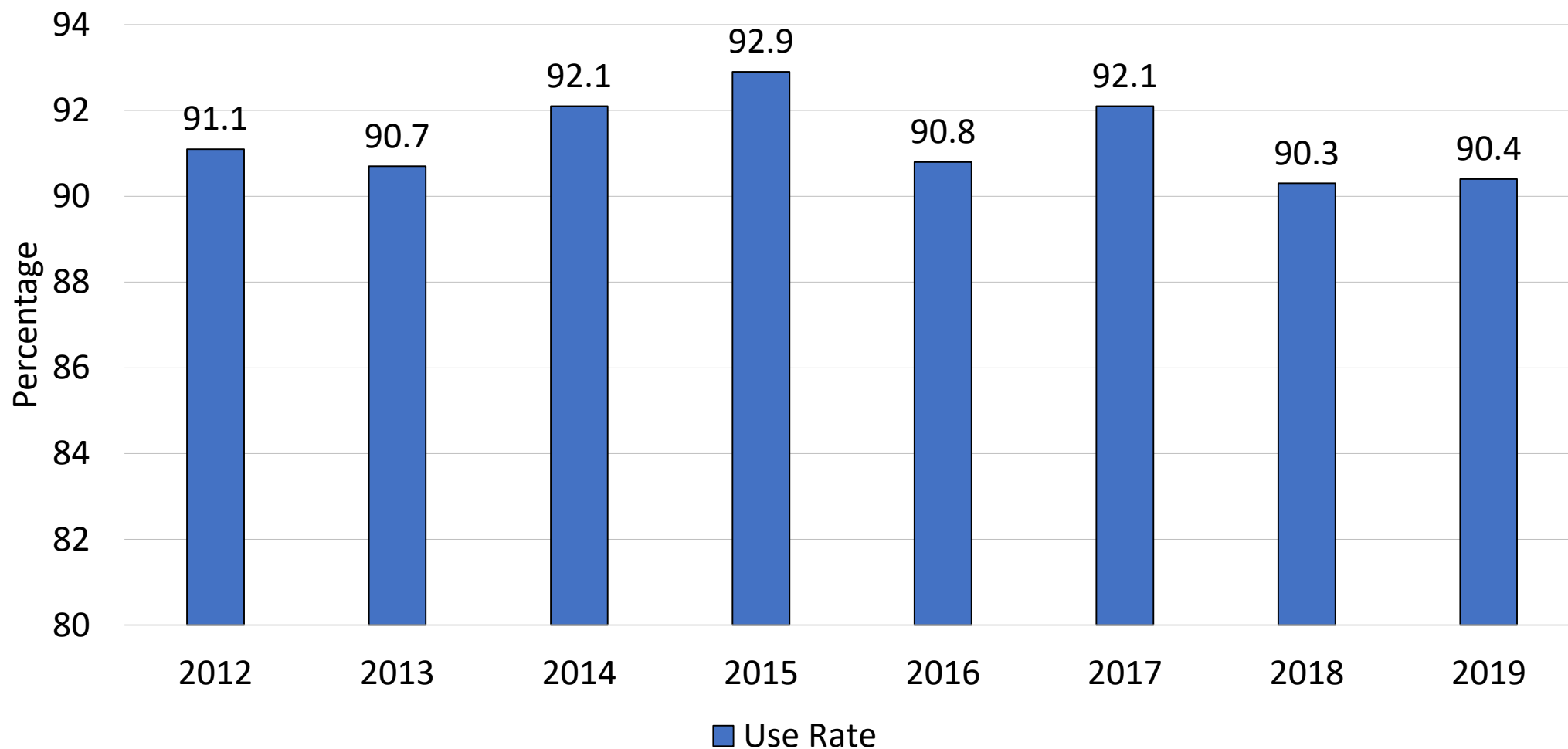
*Maryland
Highway
Safety
Office*



Maryland Roadway Fatalities 2008-2018



Seat Belt Use in Maryland: 2012 - 2019



What's an Assessment?

- Under certain circumstances a state can request an “audit” of a program through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).
- A team of non-federal, subject matter experts conducts a comprehensive review of a highway safety program area.
 - Maryland elected to have an OP Assessment; our involvement was self-initiated.



What's an Assessment?

- The assessment is intended to:
 - Provide an overview of the program's current status;
 - Note the program's strengths and weaknesses; and
 - Provide recommendations for improvement.
- Program assessments examine the significant components of a state's highway safety program.



Purpose

- The purpose of the OP Program Assessment is to:
 - Provide an extensive review of the statewide OP program through the identification of programmatic strengths and weaknesses;
 - Identify challenge areas and opportunities; and
 - Recommend enhancements and improvements.
- The assessment is intended to assist OP program planning, development, and implementation.



Process

- NHTSA recommended a team of five individuals with demonstrated subject matter expertise in the areas of:
 - Program Management;
 - Legislation, Regulation, and Policy;
 - Law Enforcement;
 - Communication & Outreach;
 - Occupant Protection for Children; and
 - and Data and Evaluation.



Process

- The assessment consisted of a review of briefing materials and interviews with those involved in MD's OP Program, including traffic safety partners, law enforcement, and MHSO staff.
- The team convened to review and analyze the information presented, noting the OP program's strengths and challenges.
- Recommendations are based on the unique characteristics of the state and what the team believes Maryland could do to improve its OP program.



Program Components

- Program Management
- Legislation, Regulation and Policy
- Enforcement
- Communications
- OP for Children
- Outreach
- Diverse Populations
- Health and Medical Communities
- Schools
- Employers
- Data and Program Evaluation



Key Recommendations

- Program Management
 - Restructure MHSO grant distribution to allow the OP Coordinator, LELs, Outreach Managers and senior leadership to identify jurisdictions and partners to receive OP funding.
 - This would allow the MHSO to target their funding to specific partners that can best impact traffic safety goals. Currently exploring options.
 - Develop a comprehensive, statewide OP strategic plan and calendar that includes enforcement, media, and outreach.
 - Currently underway with the MHSO's new media contractor.



Key Recommendations

- Law Enforcement

- Engage law enforcement leadership throughout the State to require that their officers wear seat belts while on or off duty.

- Considering implementing IACP “Below 100 Program”, which emphasizes the importance of law enforcement officers using occupant restraints while on duty. (<https://www.below100.org/>)
 - Also exploring options of implementing “Traffic Occupant Protection Strategies” (TOPS) training – a program that emphasizes use of seat belts by law enforcement and the general public.



MARYLAND

Key Recommendations

- Law Enforcement
 - Communicate with law enforcement leadership to increase the number of tickets written.
 - Develop and implement an OP enforcement grant program that is sustained throughout the year.
 - This will be a part of the reconstructed HVE waves promoted through the MHSO.



Key Recommendations

- Communications
 - Develop and conduct an awareness study to evaluate how well media messages are reaching the intended audience and if those messages are changing behavior.
 - MHSO is currently implementing a survey to accomplish this objective.
 - Once we have this in place, we will benefit greatly from partners promoting the survey.



Key Recommendations

- Occupant Protection for Children
 - Designate the Occupant Protection Program Manager as one of the State Child Passenger Safety Coordinators.
 - Currently underway with NHTSA and CPS in Maryland.
 - Develop a sustainable mentoring process for newly certified CPS technicians.
 - Increase the number of instructors, technicians, and proxies.



Key Recommendations

- Outreach
 - Make communications/outreach plans available on the ZeroDeathsMD.com website.
 - Provide “How To” guidance to assist in using the materials to support MHSO program priorities throughout the year.
 - MHSO is working with new media contractor to make these kits and the guidance materials available for partners.
 - The kits and instructional material should be available for CIOT in May and other OP-related initiatives.



Key Recommendations

- Data and Evaluation
 - Provide the number of fatal crashes and fatal injuries in a user-friendly format on ZeroDeaths.com.
 - Not sure about this one. Pros are transparency and awareness of traffic fatalities. Cons include the use of preliminary data and context.
 - Develop fact sheets and data that is easily accessible by the public and partners.
 - Storytelling. This is a primary concern for the new media contractor, and we are looking at ways to make data more easily digestible.



What's Next?

- MHSO has submitted editorial comments to NHTSA.
- NHTSA will have the final report to MD no later than March 13 and will be made public to partners at that time.
- There are many, many more recommendations.
- MHSO and the OP Emphasis Area Team will be creating a strategic plan to fulfill these recommendations.



What's Next?

- CIOT in May can use all the support we can get.
- Emphasis Area Team is always looking for new partners.
 - Talk to Mark Wall, the MHSO's OP Program Manager.
- Quick plug: Maryland Traffic Safety Summit in April:
 - Excellent opportunity to help shape the next MD Strategic Highway Safety Plan.
 - Registration details will be forthcoming.



Thank you!

**Texting while driving is dangerous
and illegal. Break the cycle. Park
the Phone Before You Drive!**

Buckle up! Every Seat Every Time.



*Maryland
Highway
Safety
Office*

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