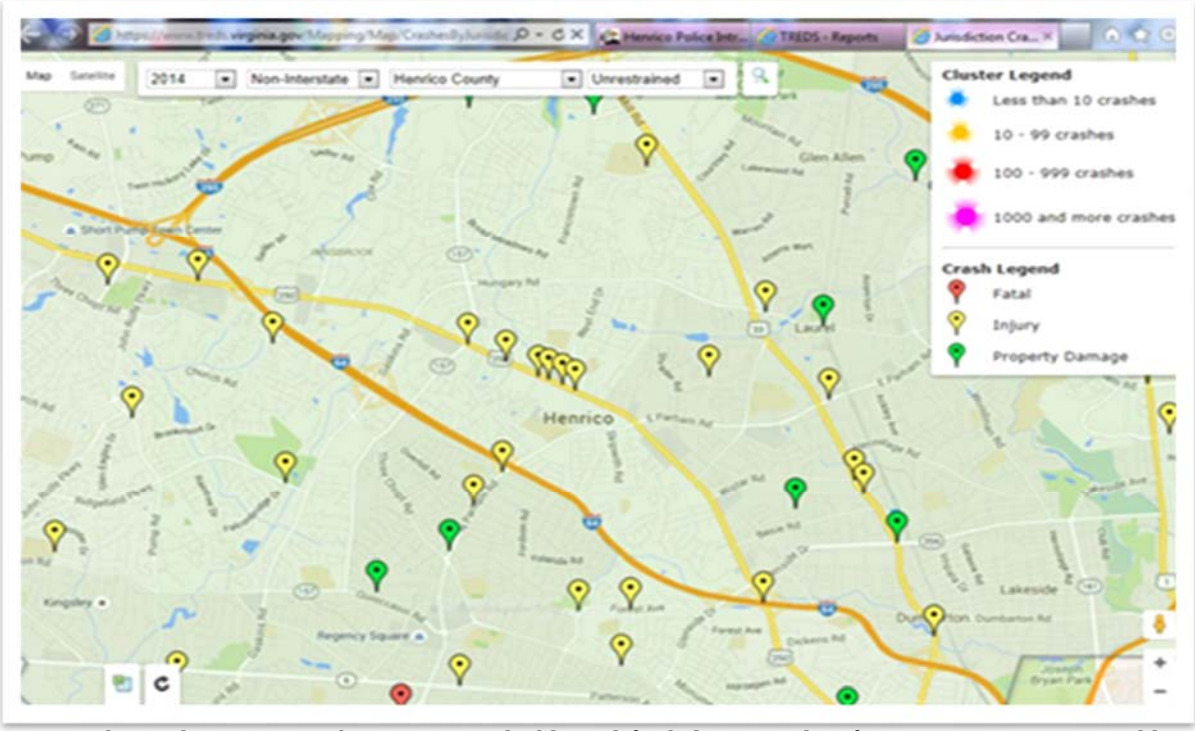
Problem Identification

As the Henrico County Police Division strives for the safety of its citizens and visitors who travel the roadways, the Police Division holds occupant protection as a primary goal. The Police Division recognizes NHTSA's Traffic Safety Fact, "...motor vehicle crashes are the leading source of death for the age group 4 through 34 years old.*" **It is a goal of the Police Division to reduce the number of individuals killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes while increasing the usage of seat belts and child safety seats.**

Virginia does not have a primary seatbelt law for occupants 18 years of age and older. A police officer must observe another violation to stop a motorist before a summons for a safety belt violation can be written. However, Virginia does have a primary enforcement seatbelt law for occupants under the age of 18 years old.

Officers in the Henrico's Traffic Enforcement Unit utilized Virginia's Department of Motor Vehicles TREDS (Traffic Records Electronic Data System) to conduct problem identification and the development of resolutions for safety programs. In the beginning of 2015, officers from the Traffic Enforcement Unit researched the seatbelt usage of drivers and passengers from Virginia's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) reportable traffic crashes that occurred in Henrico County. **We analyzed crash data from 2010 to 2014, and over the five years, the averages were: 142 (2.5 percent) drivers and 47 (0.83 percent) passengers were reported to be unbelted vehicle occupants at the time they were in reportable crashes.** In Henrico, the unbelted rate for fatalities in Henrico in 2014 was 33 percent. Although the Police Division would like to see 100 percent seatbelt usage, we believe if our message reaches at least one citizen and convinces him/her to buckle up, we consider that a success as one more life that may be saved should a collision occur on the roadway.

Additionally, twice annually, the Police Division conducts seatbelt surveys at high traffic crash locations, usually



As seen above, the TREDS website is an invaluable tool for helping us identify occupant protection problems and solutions. Here it data-maps just one area of Henrico County where crashes occurred in 2014 that resulted in fatalities, injuries, or property damage. **We used this 2014 data to plan our 2015 strategy.**

* Source: Primary Enforcement Saves Lives, NHTSA, http://buckleup.mt.gov/docs/nhtsa-primary-enforcement.pdf.

during the April and November "Click It Or Ticket" campaigns. Officers assigned to collect survey data go to designated high traffic crash intersections where they observe 100 drivers and document whether or not they were wearing their seatbelt. The Police Division conducts a "Pre" survey prior to seat belt enforcement mobilization and a "Post" survey at the conclusion of each mobilization to compare the increase or decrease in seatbelt usage after our efforts. Results of these surveys will be discussed in the Outcomes section of this submission.

The Henrico County Police Division further realizes, **as the population of first generation U.S. citizens increases there is a need to educate that section of the population who may not be familiar with the use and lifesaving benefit of child passenger safety seats.** Additionally, according to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), during the fiscal year of 2014, VDH Safety Seat Check Stations reported that 78 percent of the safety seats checked were found with at least one misuse.

The Henrico Police Traffic Enforcement Unit Unit also recognizes first generation Americans need assistance with learning about child safety seats and occupant protection.

Policy

Chief of Police, Douglas A. Middleton (retired April 15, 2016) implemented a **policy that all officers whether they are on-duty or off-duty as well as all occupants riding in a police vehicle shall wear their seatbelt.** Further, Henrico Police considers occupant protection enforcement a top priority of the agency. **Chief Middleton also designated in Police Directive G-85 (attached with Policy as allowed) that officers are to enforce seatbelt and child restraint violations when observed while on patrol.**

Below is the Police Division Policy as it reads in our Directives Manual:

282.10 USE OF SEAT BELTS

> *The unpredictability of the driving situations faced by an officer requires that all precautionary measures be utilized. All persons riding in police vehicles shall utilize their seat belt.*

The letter that Chief Middleton wrote to the entire Division is in our (attached) policy guide for this chapter. However, here is an excerpt from it to show how serious he takes officers not wearing their seat belts:

> *"I wanted to take a moment to discuss a nationwide epidemic that I would like to get your help with. This is the use of or lack thereof of seat belts by officers. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reviewed over 700 police vehicle fatalities and found that 42 percent of the time officers were not wearing their seat belts. In a comprehensive study currently underway found that 50 percent of the officers surveyed stated that they do not wear seat belts while operating a police vehicle. The seat belt is just as important as your ballistic vest, your handgun, or any tool on your belt. You have to use it for it to be effective. It is there to save lives and reduce injuries during an automobile crash."*

G-15-16 I.E. Use of Seat Belts in Division Vehicles

1. *All persons riding in Police Division vehicles shall wear their seat belt at all times while the vehicle is in motion, unless there is an articulable*

satisfactory reason for not wearing the seatbelt (i.e. arriving on a hot call or officer safety situation).

2. *Failure to wear the seat belt may result in removal from the take-home or assigned vehicle program.*
3. *Division members removed from the program for failing to wear a seat belt will be required to reapply by written request to the Chief of Police.*

G-57-13. TRANSPORTATION OF PERSONS IN CUSTODY

III. POSITIONING OF PERSONS IN CUSTODY IN THE TRANSPORT VEHICLE

A. Division Vehicles

1. *When one officer is transporting one person in custody, the person in custody shall be handcuffed and secured with a seatbelt in the right front seat.*
2. *When two officers are transporting one person in custody, the person in custody shall be handcuffed and secured with a seatbelt in the right front seat and one of the officers shall be placed in the right rear seat.*

G-85-11 REV. TRAFFIC LAW ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Traffic enforcement is an important tool that can be utilized to enforce traffic laws and gather information concerning criminal activity. Seatbelt and child restraint enforcement, speeding, and identifying impaired drivers are a top priority. Officers are encouraged to conduct various enforcement activities to address these issues. Enforcement action should be taken upon detection of a violation of law or a potentially hazardous act and shall be taken in a uniform and consistent manner. Any information from these enforcement activities can be utilized by Homeland Security, Patrol, CASE, or any Division component to increase traffic safety and further the suppression of criminal activities.

This Directive continues on with the following; lists types of violations and their acceptable enforcement actions, outlines the considerations and procedures affiliated with traffic stops, executing the stop, discusses officer-violator relations, procedures when using traffic specials grant money, and traffic specials reporting procedures. **It is attached along with G-85 in their entirety as allowed.**

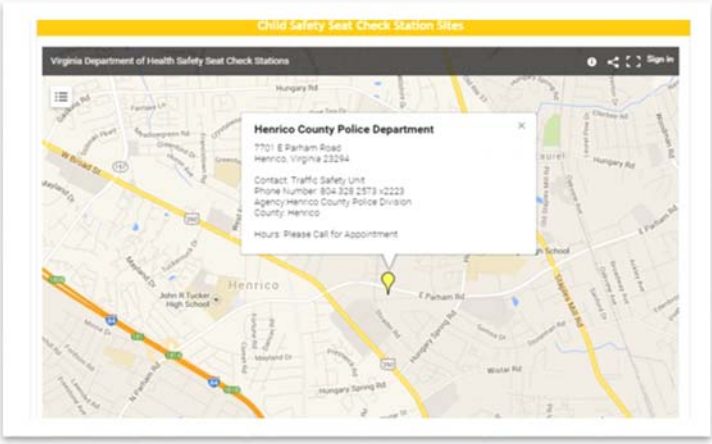
Planning

The Traffic Enforcement Unit is a specialized police unit that consists of officers specially trained in many aspects of traffic safety, of which occupant protection is one. **Each year, this specialized unit (as well as all other sections and units in the Henrico County Police Division [HCPD]) must develop annual goals, which they submit to the Chief as part of the Division's overall goals and objectives for the entire fiscal year ahead.**

Additionally the Police Division supports Virginia's Strategic Highway Safety Plan by ways of: educating the public on the importance of using safety belts, conduct high-visibility safety belt enforcement campaigns, e.g., "Click It or Ticket", and improving child occupant protection through education, outreach, and enforcement.

In 2015, Chief Middleton partnered the Police Division with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) by way of a signed Memorandum of Understanding that Henrico Police would be a Safety Seat Check Station. By visiting the station or a safety seat check event, parents and caregivers could receive free, hands-on help from certified child passenger safety technicians to learn how to install their safety seat. We believe, when we work together, law enforcement and public health communities are a strong force that can affect real change in this county. Together we can grow healthier communities where our friends, family, and co-workers live, learn, work and play.

The Police Division has further established the "Traffic Safety Hotline" where a parent or caregiver can call and set up an appointment with one of the Division's certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians to have their safety seat installation checked.



This screenshot of the Virginia Department of Health and Safety shows HCPD as a Child Safety Seat Station site as discussed on the previous page.

Also in 2015, the Traffic Enforcement Unit began H.O.P.E. Initiative, "Henrico's Occupant Protection Education" Initiative. For this initiative, the Traffic Enforcement Unit partnered with the Children's Hospital of Richmond at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Our target audience for this educational initiative is high school students within the Henrico County Public Schools system. Our directed action is to provide lessons on the importance of occupant protection and safe driving practices. At the end of the lessons, the students will have an opportunity to sign a, "Seatbelt Pledge" (right).

The goals of this initiative support the Department of Motor Vehicles' Strategic Highway Safety Plan in three areas:

1. **To decrease unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities.**
2. **To decrease the number of drivers, age 20 or younger, involved in fatal crashes.**
3. **To increase (statewide) observed seat belt use of front seat outboard in passenger vehicles.**

In addition, each month, Traffic Enforcement Unit members meet to discuss details of that week's operations, programs, or initiatives. Unit members then must develop a detailed plan for each operation, program, or initiative using the Division's Operations Plan form, HCPD-383. This form lists the summary of the event or incident, objectives, threats/hazards, comments/notes, briefing, resources needed/used, personnel and their assignments as well as other information. This form helps ensure a well-planned, effective operation for each event, initiative, or operation,

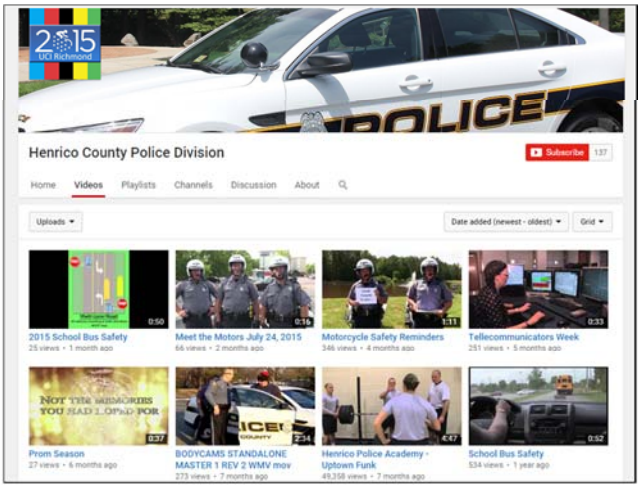
Pictured above are a sample pledge card and promotional pledge banner.

which must be conducted to meet the Unit's annual goals.

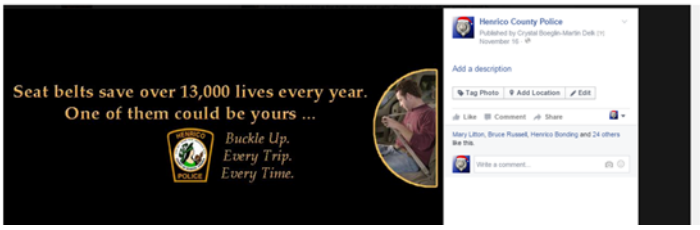
In 2015, the Police Division planned and conducted 64 various operations that included Occupant Protection. Operations included initiatives such as "Click It Or Ticket", child safety seat checks, and AAA I-Drive event, a day-long program aimed at teen driving. Of the 64 operations, 51 were enforcement, five were child safety seat checks, and one was a two-day operation with AAA Mid-Atlantic. The Henrico County Police Division takes occupant protection seriously and averages one seat belt operation per week throughout the year.

To further support the Police Division's goals and to support Virginia's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, the Police Division utilized partnerships built between the Division and the following: NHTSA, Virginia DMV, and ODU (from the Occupant Protection Study Project in an effort to increase nighttime and daytime seatbelt usage). During 2015, the Police Division participated in Operation Nighthawk. We selected areas that were top crash locations from each of the Division's three Patrol Stations. The majority of nighttime efforts dedicated to this campaign were conducted between the hours of 8:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.

To further support solutions outlined in Virginia's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, the Division's Media Relations Unit also plans their marketing goals for the entire year. Each month, as part of their overall marketing plan for the Division, they market Occupant Protection awareness, Henrico County Police Division Occupant Protection programs, as well as other traffic safety information and campaigns.



Five out of eight YouTube videos produced during 2015 by the Division's Public Information Office (PIO) pertained to traffic safety. In addition, the Division's PIO posted messages to Facebook (below) and twitter pertaining to traffic safety.



Training

During 2015, officers from the Traffic Enforcement Unit instructed 43 recruit police officers in occupant protection and child passenger seat inspection. In the Police Division's Basic Training Academies, police instructors emphasize occupant protection to recruits during their instruction of Traffic Crash Investigation, Motor Vehicle Laws, and EVOT (Emergency Vehicle Operators Training). During the crash investigation block of instruction, recruits are taught on ways to examine post-crash vehicles and identify if the occupants were/ were not wearing their seatbelts. **The Police Division currently has 5 certified child passenger seat technicians. Three officers received continuing education as child passenger seat technicians with the help of Safe Kids Virginia.**

In March and July of 2015, the Traffic Crash Investigation cadre further educated the Basic Police Academy recruit class by attending off-site training at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) where they were able to observe a live crash test. Additionally, at IIHS students were educated on safety features installed in vehicles and the importance of restraint systems.

Recruits and trainers at one of the 2015 IIHS training sessions.

The Traffic Enforcement Unit also conducted 18 separate roll call training sessions during which the remainders of our officers were trained in occupant

protection enforcement under Virginia law. Each roll call session lasted approximately 30 minutes and highlighted situations where occupant protection violations are primary offenses.

Henrico Police sent two officers to Pennsylvania State University to attend the Pennsylvania State Police Reconstruction Seminar during the dates of October 13-15, 2015. The officers who attended the conference received updated training in the utilization the Crash Data Retrieval (CDR) tool. The CDR tool is a commercially available instrument that can provide access to critical vehicle crash data from the largest selection of car manufacturers. Examples of Crash Data parameters include: vehicle speed, crash severity (delta-V), seat belt circuit status, and airbag deployment data. This data can be accessed post-crash to determine if occupants had been using their seatbelts or not at the time of a crash.

Two Henrico Officers along with hundreds of other officers from throughout the country gathered in 2015 for an accident reconstruction seminar at Pennsylvania State University.

Public Information & Education

The Henrico County Police Division continued a heavy emphasis on occupant protection in 2015 in its public information and education campaigns and enforcement. **Henrico Police continued their involvement with the "Click It Or Ticket" campaign to raise awareness and promote the message to citizens using the media, signs, variable message boards, and static displays. Additionally, The Division developed partnerships with AAA (I-Drive), Virginia Department of Health, Safe Kids Virginia, and Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU to send a united message of occupant protection.**

Henrico Police enjoyed working throughout 2015 with colleagues from the Virginia Department of Health as well as the Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU to host five child passenger safety seat inspection events in Henrico County.

Officer Greg Shelton provides instruction to a citizen on how to properly install a child safety seat at one of Henrico's events.

Henrico Police partnered with AAA Mid-Atlantic for the I-Drive Teen Driver Safety Event that took place September 29-30, 2015, at Richmond International Raceway. Six hundred high school students were invited to attend the event which enhanced their driver education curriculum and helped teen drivers establish safe driving habits that start with "buckling up" when getting behind the wheel. Students experienced the seat belt "convincer" sponsored by the Virginia State Police, learned about the dangers of impaired driving, experienced blind spot demonstrations and sat through a "mock" trial assembled with a real judge and deputies.

Henrico County Police values the partnerships that it built with such highly respected members of the community such as NHTSA, Virginia's DMV, and Old Dominion University during **Operation Nighthawk**. During intervention periods, paid media outreach was provided by NHTSA and DMV emphasizing the nighttime seatbelt enforcement message.

The Division's Public Information Office (PIO) uses a variety of social media sites to communicate with the community the importance of properly using seatbelts and car seats. This is the 6th year that the Police Division has used social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube to send messages about the importance of occupant protection. In addition, the PIO uses news releases that it distributes to its media contact list to promote and raise awareness of occupant protection. The PIO also partners with County libraries to distribute posters and flyers announcing upcoming child safety seat checks and other traffic safety events.

This "tweet" was sent on Valentines day to remind drivers to buckle up and directed them to our Facebook site to see a coordinating post with similar information. It is just an example of the many "tweets" and Facebook posts made during 2015.

The Police Division has two other ways it conveys the importance of occupant protection to its citizens. One way, is with the County's own public access cable channel, HCTV-17, which broadcasts public safety information using slides that contain information about occupant protection and enforcement campaigns. Henrico County also utilizes variable message boards to remind citizens to wear their seatbelts. The message usually flashes "Click It Or Ticket" or "Buckle Up". The message boards are set up in areas where we find seatbelts are not heavily utilized.

This illustrates our use of the variable message board to promote seat belt usage and raise awareness of occupant protection.

Enforcement

Henrico Police utilizes checkpoints and group enforcement efforts combined with regular patrol to calm occupant protection violations. In 2015 Henrico County Police issued 1,817 seatbelt summonses, and 572 child safety seat summonses during enforcement and checkpoints. The Henrico Police Division always identifies occupant protection violations as a top priority in traffic safety. All regular duty hours are spent identifying seatbelt and child safety seat violations. **The Police Division spent 425 hours in 2015 utilizing grant funded overtime to enforce occupant protection laws. During these enforcement operations, police issued 366 summonses for seatbelt violations, with 200 of the summonses being issued for violations between the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.** Additionally, within the selected target areas: 108 summonses were issued for child safety seat violations **with 74 of the summonses being written between the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.**

During the 2015 Operation Nighthawk initiative in which the Police Division partnered with NHTSA, DMV, and ODU, Henrico Police officers concentrated their enforcement efforts in selected target areas (high crash locations) that were previously identified. During the dates of July 25-27, August 1-3, August 8, November 21-26, and November 28, officers spent 877.5 labor hours within the selected target areas conducting traffic enforcement with an emphasis on occupant protection. Of the 877.5 labor hours spent, 407.25 hours were spent during the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. The Henrico Police Division feels that the use of License and Equipment Road Checks well as Sobriety Road Checks are viable ways to promote the occupant protection message**.**

2015 Operation Nighthawk	
Dates of intervention **July 25-27, Aug.1-3, Nov. 21-26, Nov. 28**	
Labor	
Total labor -hours spent within target areas	877.5
Labor-hours spent during the time period 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.	407.25
Summonses Issued - See Outcomes	

Above is the breakout of labor hours spent conducting Operation Nighthawk occupant protection enforcement.

During 2015, officers conducted 19 License and Equipment Road Checks and 3 Sobriety Road Checks. As a result of the road checks, officers issued 45 summonses for seatbelt violations and 47 summonses for child safety seat violations. Of all 22 combined road checks conducted during 2015, 17 were operational during the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. The summonses issued numbers are discussed in Outcomes section.

Henrico Officers also participate in "Operation Back to School", which is another enforcement effort concentrating on occupant protection. The goal of the campaign is to remind drivers that school is back in session and the importance of obeying school buses and school zone signage. The summonses issued numbers are discussed in Outcomes section.

Virginia's Strategic Highway Safety Plan shows unrestrained occupant deaths and serious injuries start to increase when the weather gets warmer. **Therefore, to focus on occupant protection during the summer months, the Police Division's initiative is SPF-100 (Safety Prevents Fatalities- 100 percent). This is a summer-long initiative that places an emphasis on speeding, impaired driving, and occupant protection.** The summonses issued numbers are discussed in Outcomes section.

During the spring "Click It Or Ticket" campaign, the Henrico Police Traffic Enforcement Unit participates in a statewide initiative entitled, "Route 60 Blitz". This annual event involves law enforcement agencies across the Commonwealth of Virginia through which Route 60 passes. The initiative always takes place on the Friday of Memorial Day weekend. **The initiative concentrates on all traffic violations and is conducted from 3:00pm-7:00pm.** The summonses issued numbers are discussed in Outcomes section.

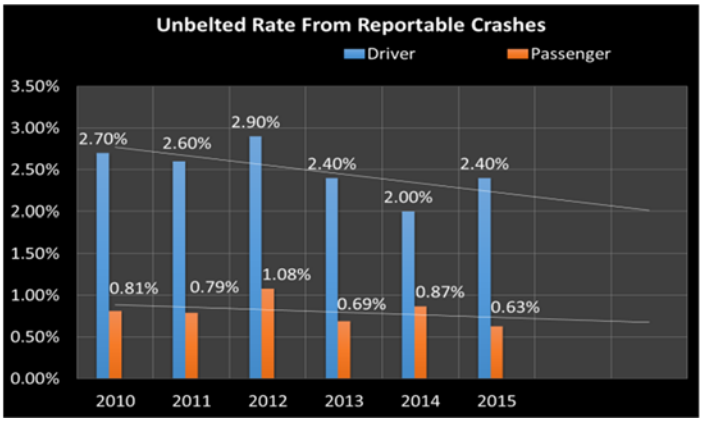
Outcomes

The Henrico County Police Division is always conducting enforcement in areas where problems are identified. The Police Division its own policing operations model, TEMPO (Technology Enhance Modern Policing Operations) which incorporates the best of several common policing operations. TEMPO not only community policing and problem solving to reduce crime and crashes, but also interprets intelligence data collected and analyzes it for future operations. All sections of the Police Division are utilized to accomplish this operation to include Traffic Enforcement Unit, Patrol Bureau, Investigative Units, and Community Policing.

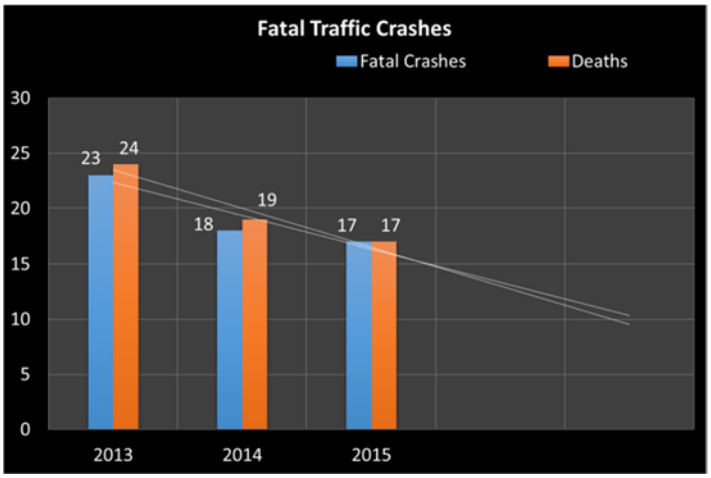
Officers from The Traffic Enforcement Unit continue to analyze and interpret data collected from Virginia's Department of Motor Vehicles TREDS (Traffic Records

Electronic Data System) website to monitor the effectiveness of the safety programs that the Police Division implements in order to make Henrico County's roadways among the safest in the country.

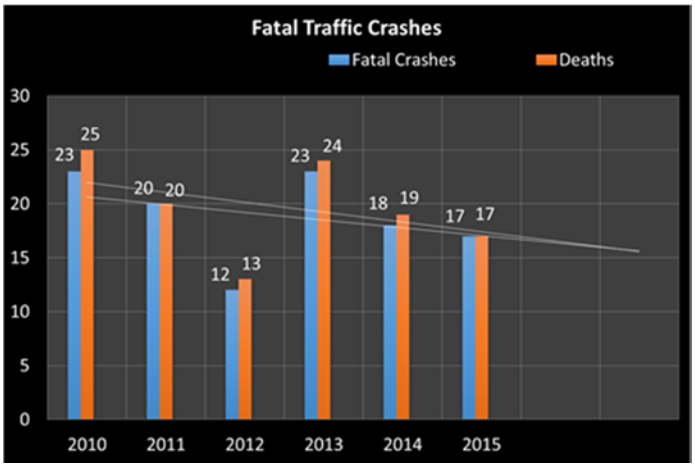
Based on empirical data, Henrico Police officers continue to organize and develop coordinated, innovative approaches to improve highway safety. **Data shows that over a 6-year period the "Unbelted Rate from Reportable Crashes" continues to lower, displaying a downward trend. Analysis shows that 2015 had the lowest unbelted passenger rate (.63 percent) from reportable crashes over the previous five years.**



This graph above illustrates the downward trend of unbelted passengers from reportable crashes. The graph below illustrates the downward trend of fatal crashes and deaths.



Additionally, data analyzed from Virginia's Department of Motor Vehicles TREDS (Traffic Records Electronic Data System) website shows that the total number of Fatal Crash and Deaths on all Henrico County roadways continues to decrease, also displaying a downward trend (see graph bottom left and below for the five year trend).



Because of the Division's diligence, education, and outreach to increase child safety seat usage in Henrico County, the Traffic Enforcement Unit's Seat Check Station, from 2014 to 2015, has seen a 38 percent increase in the number of parents and caregivers that had seats checked by a certified safety seat technician.

Henrico Police Division's partnership with the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), Virginia's DMV, and Old Dominion University (ODU) continued the Occupation Protection Study Project during **Operation Nighthawk.** Data collected revealed that seatbelt usage at target locations increased with the intervention of high visibility traffic enforcement and media outreach. **Within the target areas, 156 summonses were issued for seatbelt violations, 27 summonses were issued for child safety seat violations. The total number of summonses issued during the intervention period was 1,821.**

Seat Belt Survey outcomes in the spring of 2015 showed the "Pre" seat belt survey at 81 percent compliance, and the "Post" seat belt survey showed 85 percent compliance. Comparatively, Virginia's seatbelt usage rate for 2014 was 77.3 percent.

An additional benefit from the project has been a reduction in traffic crashes at the specified target locations. For example, the target location that was

selected as the #1 crash location (by frequency) for the Division's Central Station has fallen out of the top 5 for the first quarter of 2015. The Division believes that this project will have additional long standing benefits for years to come.

2015 Operation Nighthawk	
Dates of intervention **July 25-27, Aug.1-3, Nov. 21-26, Nov. 28**	
Summonses	
Summonses issued for seatbelt	156
Summonses issued for child safety	27
Total number of summonses issued	1,821

This chart above shows the outcome of Operation Nighthawk regarding the number of summonses issued.

Operation Back to School is another enforcement effort concentrating on occupant protection in school zones. During the 2015 enforcement effort officers issued 8 seatbelt citations and 3 child restraint citations between the dates of September 8-11, 2015.

During the summer, the Police Division's initiative is SPF-100 (Safety Prevents Fatalities- 100 percent). During this initiative in 2015, officers issued 497 summonses for seatbelt violations and 182 summonses for child safety seat violations.

During the spring "Click It Or Ticket" campaign, the Henrico Police Traffic Enforcement Unit participates in a statewide initiative entitled, "Route 60 Blitz". On May 22, 2015, this year's initiative produced 26 seatbelt violations and six child safety seat violations during this four-hour period.

During 2015, officers conducted 19 License and Equipment Road Checks and three Sobriety Road Checks. As a result of the road checks, officers issued 45 summonses for seatbelt violations and 47 summonses for child safety seat violations. Of the 22 road checks conducted during 2015, 17 were operational during the hours of 6:00pm- 6:00 am. Seat Belt Survey Outcomes in the spring of 2015, the "Pre" seatbelt survey showed 81 percent compliance, and the "Post" seatbelt survey showed 85 percent compliance. Comparatively, Virginia's seatbelt usage rate for 2014 was 77.3 percent.

The Henrico Police Division recognized the top two officers in the Division with the highest number of Occupant Protection summonses issued in 2015. They are Officer R. W. Milleker (right) and Officer C.B. Read (below).

At the County Board of Supervisors' Meeting on February 9, 2016, Ms. Melanie Stokes, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' Occupant Protection and Media Coordinator,

presented Police Officer C. B. Read (above) with the "Virginia DMV, Highway Safety Officer 2015 Seatbelt Leadership Award", recognizing his exemplary efforts during calendar year 2015.

Due to the continued efforts regarding occupant protection enforcement, Henrico County had a favorable reduction in fatal traffic crashes. In 2014, Henrico Police investigated 14 fatal crashes; **in 2015 officers investigated nine fatal traffic crashes.** In 2014 Henrico Police investigated 1,282 injury crashes, **in 2015 officers investigated 1,406 injury crashes. In 2015, Henrico Police investigated a total of 6,099 crashes (reportable & non-reportable). Of the 6,099 crashes only 1,406 involved injuries, with a total of 2,204 injured individuals. However, of the 2,204 injured individual, only 20 were unrestrained injuries. That equates to less than one percent of all injured.**