

STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY SAFETY CONCEPT PAPER
Concept Paper Summary

Applicant Information

Applicant Agency:	City of Miami Beach
Implementing Agency:	Miami Beach Police Department
Concept Paper Title:	Occupant Protection and Child Passenger Safety
Priority Area for Concept Paper:	Occupant Protection and Child Passenger Safety
Amount Requested:	

Type of Project:	Local
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Type of Request:	
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Previous Year's Project Number (if Continuation):	
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Statement of the Problem:

According to the Florida Department of Transportation's last safety belt study, Florida's statewide safety belt usage rate for 2019 is 89.8%. This rate is down 0.8 percentage points from the 2018 measured rate of 90.6%, the highest belt use rate measured to date, but the decrease is not considered a statistically significant difference. Wearing a safety belt by older children and adults is the single most effective way to save lives and reduce serious injuries in crashes. Research has found that lap and shoulder combination safety belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-safety passenger car occupants by 45% and the risk of moderate to critical injury by 50%.

The Florida Department of Transportation Highway Safety Matrix ranks the City of Miami Beach 32 out of 34

cities for occupant protection-related serious injuries and fatalities with populations of 75,000 and above. However, Miami-Dade County is ranked number one for occupant protection-related serious injuries and fatalities in Group 1 with populations of 200,001 and above. The City of Miami Beach is the main attraction of Miami-Dade County with millions of transited visitors yearly. Although we rank 32, this number may not truly represent our need for dedicated education and enforcement programs to increase overall safety belt usage and decrease the number of injuries and fatalities associated with unrestrained or improperly restrained motor vehicle occupants.

Miami Beach is a worldwide destination known for its nightlife and special events. However, this changed in 2020 due to the global coronavirus pandemic. On March 17, 2020, Governor DeSantis ordered all bars and nightclubs to close. This was followed by curfews and restrictions issued by Miami Dade County. On April 1, 2020, Governor DeSantis issued a statewide stay-at-home order. This greatly reduced not only local traffic, but transient traffic within our city. On June 10, 2020, the City of Miami Beach reopened with social distancing guidelines restricting restaurants and other establishments to a limited capacity.

Gradually, Miami Beach is returning to its world-class nightlife, with future plans to bring back large special events hosted by Miami Beach which includes Art Deco Weekend, South Beach Food and Wine Festival, Urban Beach Weekend, Spring Break (6 weeks spanning February-April), Art Basel, as well as numerous holiday weekends (July 4, Labor Day, etc.). Any given day can explode with a special or impromptu event especially in the age of social media. These events attract Miami Beach residents and visitors alike. There are no other cities, similar in size to Miami Beach, home to as many special events.

The City of Miami Beach is home to approximately 92,000 daily residents, as reflected by its Group 1 inclusion. That number though is deceiving as it has been estimated that Miami Beach experiences a population influx on weekends, swelling to upwards of 200,000 people. This number is even more drastic during special event weekends, reaching between 350,000 to well over 500,000 people.

Supporting Data:

Miami Beach ranked #32 out of 34 cities, according to the Highway Safety Matrix FY2022 in Group 1 (populations above 75,000). Last year, the Miami Beach Police Department entered a partnerships with FDOT, receiving a \$60,000 overtime grant to focus on occupant protection enforcement. Our efforts are working as the number of fatalities decreased by 41 percent, but abandoning our efforts now is likely to lead to an increase in injury and fatality crashes.

In 2020, the total number of crashes in the City decreased by over 37%. However, during the same time frame, there was still a significant number of safety belt citations issued. As previously stated, 2020 had its share of challenges. Below is a quote from the NHTSA December 2020 newsletter.

“On October 1, 2020, NHTSA released a special report analyzing the traffic safety environment during the national public health emergency. The report, using diverse data sources of current traffic safety, demonstrates traffic fatality numbers decreased in the first and second quarters of 2020, during the peak of the lockdown. However, because traffic volumes decreased more significantly than did the number of fatal crashes, the traffic fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled increased significantly between the two quarters. The study suggests driving patterns and behaviors changed significantly and that drivers who remained on the roads

engaged in more risky behavior, including speeding, failing to wear safety belts, and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. There is evidence indicating increased alcohol use and higher drug use during the initial and ongoing months of the pandemic.”

As indicated below, Miami Beach saw a significant decrease in crashes from 2019 to 2020:

Total Crashes

Year	Total Crashes	Crashes with injuries	Fatalities
2018	5525	841	6
2019	5277	834	12
2020	3297	218	7

Occupant protection-related Citations Issued:

Year	Total safety belt UTC issued	Child Restraint	Passenger
2018	147	94	157
2019	141	76	144
2020	856	23	73

There was a decline in Occupant Restraint enforcement during 2018 and 2019, and that trend continued into 2020.

Proposed Solution:

To fund the Miami Beach Police Department Occupant Protection and Child Passenger Initiative, we are requesting funds in the amount of \$75,000 for overtime enforcement.

The Miami Beach Police Department (MBPD) will implement a comprehensive occupant protection program consisting of high visibility enforcement, community outreach and education.

The MBPD Buckle Up Campaign will be implemented using countermeasures that work as detailed in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s “Counter Measures that Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices (ninth edition).” 2.1 Short-Term, High-Visibility Seat Belt Law Enforcement, The most common high-visibility seat belt law enforcement method consists of short (typically lasting for two weeks), intense, highly publicized periods of increased belt law enforcement, possibly using checkpoints, saturation patrols, or enforcement zones.

In addition, we will implement 2.2 Integrated Nighttime Seat Belt Enforcement. This suggest that combining DUI and safety belt law checkpoints, saturation patrols, or enforcement zone operations can be conducted at night, when safety belt use is lower, DUI higher, and crash risk greater than during the day.

Communications and Outreach Supporting Enforcement (3.1) will also be a core component of the solution. The MBPD has a very active social media and general media presence and has been very successful in promoting our HVE and Impaired Driver Operations. We will advertise and promote each operation we conduct

targeting safety belts on social media.

The Miami Beach Police Department will conduct high-visibility, zero-tolerance occupant protection enforcement operations at locations identified as having a high frequency of traffic crashes that had unrestrained occupants throughout the city. Operations will be conducted up to four times a month and will utilize up to six Officers and one Supervisor per detail, as staff permits. During these operations, officers will not only educate motorists and passengers but will distribute occupant protection-related educational materials. Officers conducting overtime activities will complete an activity report. Miami Beach PD will also participate in the National Click It or Ticket public awareness and enforcement campaign.

The Miami Beach Police Department is committed to conducting these operations and are hopeful of a continuing partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation on this worthwhile and life-saving endeavor.

Sustainability:

The Miami Beach Police Department (MBPD) has been committed to traffic enforcement as reflected by its FDOT grant applications, its enforcement initiatives, and the creation of additional positions in the Traffic Operations Unit. Unfortunately, as a City with many traffic challenges, our resources are stretched very thin. We have placed additional focus on other areas of traffic safety, which has prevented us from utilizing more resources to occupant protection. The budget and staffing constraints have also been exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. As a result, the MBPD would not be able to sustain this initiative without the financial assistance from FDOT. We look forward to continuing this partnership so we can continue to promote occupant protection and child safety for our residents and visitors.

Project Objectives:

- a. Strive to decrease occupant protection-related injuries and fatalities in the City of Miami Beach by 3% when compared to the previous three-year average.
- b. Conduct a minimum of three occupant protection high visibility overtime enforcement operations per month.
- c. Conduct two nighttime (between the hours of 9:00 pm and 6:00 am) occupant protection high visibility overtime enforcement operations conducted during the project period.
- d. Participate in the National Click It Or Ticket campaign through occupant protection overtime enforcement operations and/or educational/community activities.
- e. Provide occupant protection information and education to the public through the use of social media and/or press releases at least 2 times during the project period.

Evaluation:

- a. Occupant protection-related injuries and fatalities are reduced by 3% citywide, compared to the previous three-year average.
- b. The number of occupant protection high visibility overtime enforcement operations conducted per month.
- c. The number of nighttime (between the hours of 9:00 pm and 6:00 am) occupant protection high visibility overtime enforcement operations conducted during the project period.
- d. The number of occupant protection-related overtime enforcement operations conducted and/or education/community activities conducted/participated in during the National Click It Or Ticket campaign.

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e. The number of instances that occupant protection information and education is provided to the public through the use of social media and/or press releases during the project period.