Safety Belt Observation Instructions

* Qualifying vehicles include:
	+ passenger automobiles,
	+ pickup trucks,
	+ sport-utility vehicles (SUVs), or
	+ vans (private, public, and commercial).
* Pickup trucks should be coded as “trucks.” Jeeps, Broncos, Blazers, and other vehicles of that type should be coded as sport utility vehicles. Eligible vehicles should be observed regardless of the State in which they are registered.
* Belt use will be observed for Drivers only.

**The following procedures will be used in conducting observations of safety belt use:**

1. For best visibility, observe standing on the side of the road (and not from your vehicle). Choose a safe location that does not impede the flow of traffic and provides you a good vantage point to see inside vehicles as they pass by.
2. As you observe a qualifying vehicle, record the type of vehicle (car, truck, SUV, van) and shoulder restraint use (yes or no) of the driver.
3. Make sure you observe ***various*** vantage points as part of confirming driver usage or non-usage as vehicles approach:
* from the front windshield as they move toward you
* from the side windows when they are in front of you
* as they pass (look for the belt strap coming across the neck/shoulder area)
1. If the person is using the shoulder belt improperly, e.g., has the shoulder strap under his/her arm or behind the back, this should be recorded as not restrained.
2. If you notice a lap belt in use without a shoulder belt, it should be recorded as not restrained. Only shoulder belts are to be counted. Even if the vehicle likely has no shoulder belts, code the occupant(s) as not restrained.
3. If you are observing a multiple-lane roadway, if traffic is light enough and you can see well, observe traffic in all lanes. If traffic is too heavy to observe every vehicle, you should determine a ***reference point*** (e.g., a sign) up the road for the appropriate lane(s). Observe the next vehicle to pass the reference point after the last vehicle has been recorded.
4. If you are observing at a stop light, wait for cars to collect during a red light. Then skip the first car and walk along the line of cars, recording driver belt use as you go. When the light turns green and traffic resumes, walk back towards the light and begin again with the next cycle.