

Dear School Resource Officer, YOVASO Sponsor, and other safety program sponsors:

This fall, Youth of Virginia Speak Out About Traffic Safety (YOVASO) is excited to announce our annual **“Save Your Tailgate, Buckle-Up & Slow Down”** (SYT) campaign to increase seat belt use among youth and teens at high schools, middle schools, and through various youth groups across the Commonwealth. As traffic crashes continue to be the number one cause of death for high school-aged teenagers, seat belts are the best preventative measure against injuries and fatalities. We all know that a football player would never step onto the field without wearing a helmet, and the SYT campaign drives home the message that drivers and passengers should never get into a vehicle without wearing their safety equipment – a seat belt! By participating in the SYT campaign this fall, your school or youth group can help students develop the buckle up habit – a habit that ultimately could save their lives in a crash.

Additionally, this campaign includes a speed prevention component for high schools. Speeding is consistently a key factor in all fatal crashes involving a teen driver in Virginia causing approximately half of all fatal teen crashes. High schools and youth groups with high school-aged students are encouraged to make speed prevention a central focus of their campaign to help influence teens to slow down and obey posted speed limits.

This year YOVASO has teamed up with the Virginia State Police, the DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office, and State Farm to bring your school a fun and educational campaign. We encourage all schools and youth groups to participate by filling out the online Registration and Order Form to receive **free** educational and incentive materials on seat belt safety and speed prevention. Although the campaign is a statewide competition for prizes, **schools and youth groups are not required to compete**. All levels of participation are encouraged and even the simplest of activities will help us reach more students and impact more young lives.

During the campaign, competing schools and youth groups must coordinate one creative event promoting seat belt safety and/or speed prevention, coordinate call to action activities in school, hold two seat belt checks to determine the percentage of students buckling up, and hold home football game activities (high school only). **Non-competing schools and youth groups may choose which components they want to complete based on their time and resources. Simple activity ideas are included to help get your school or youth group started.**

To make this campaign accessible for all school schedules, each school or youth group may choose which time frame they would like to complete their campaign activities. Period 1 runs from September 24 to October 12, 2018. Period 2 runs from October 1 to October 19, 2018. Below are the registration deadlines:

- If you plan to participate in Period 1, your Registration and Order Form is due by 5 p.m. on September 7.
- If you plan to participate in Period 2, your Registration and Order Form is due by 5 p.m. on September 14.

Please complete the Registration and Order Form online at yovaso.org.

The attached SYT campaign packet includes everything you need to get started with planning your activities. If your school or youth group doesn't plan to compete for prizes, the *Activity Ideas, Announcements, and Statistics / Resources* pages will help get you started with simple and easy activities to complete.

Have fun with the campaign and strive to encourage the students in your school and community to develop a habit of buckling up and slowing down!

Best Wishes,

Casey Taylor, YOVASO Program Development Coordinator