

AORP ALBERTA OCCUPANT RESTRAINT PROGRAM

A Provincial Traffic Safety Program

Delivered by:
Alberta Health Services and
Alberta police services

Supported by:

- Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research
- Alberta Health and Wellness
- Alberta Health Services
- Alberta Transportation
- Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security
- Calgary Police Service
- Edmonton Police Service
- Insurance Bureau of Canada
- Municipal police services
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- St. John Ambulance
- Transport Canada

Option 4 Program Update March 2011

This update explains the Option 4 program and gives information on: sustaining an Option 4 program for areas actively involved, starting an Option 4 program in areas interested in this effective enforcement-education partnership, or stopping an existing Option 4 program.

What is the Option 4 Program?

The goal of the Option 4 program is to reduce the number and the severity of injuries to children as a result of motor vehicle collisions through a uniform, effective, education and enforcement program. Safety checks coordinated by the local police service, the RCMP or other enforcement agencies are held on a regular basis. At a safety check, children riding in vehicles are checked to make sure they are correctly buckled up in a child safety seat, a booster seat or a seat belt depending on their size. A ticket may be issued to the driver if any misuse or nonuse of the child restraint is identified.

A driver who receives a traffic ticket usually has three options:

- Pay the ticket.
- Plead not guilty by mail.
- Plead not guilty in court.

Through this program, drivers ticketed for incorrect restraint of a passenger under 16 years of age may be given an additional option, called Option 4. Option 4 allows the driver to attend an education session on proper use of child safety seats, booster seats and seat belts for children. After completion of this session, the ticket is recommended for withdrawal and the driver does not pay the fine. The Option 4 program exists in many areas in Alberta. In areas where the program is not available, the driver must deal with the ticket in another way.

The Option 4 program began under the Alberta Occupant Restraint Program (AORP) in 1999, and was initially called, "Think the Kids Are Buckled up Right? Think Again?" The name was subsequently shortened to, "Think...Think Again" or TTA. Over time, the name changed again to simply become Option 4. A variety of partners participate in the Option 4 program, including enforcement, health and emergency medical services as well as local community partners. When the program was initially implemented it was provincial in nature, but this is no longer the case.

Where implemented, the Option 4 program has had a positive impact on the use of child restraints, and has resulted in successful partnerships between health and enforcement to address a traffic safety issue.

The Option 4 Program in 2011 – Moving Forward

Opportunities exist across the province for Option 4. A number of communities, including Edmonton, Calgary, and some rural centers, have strong Option 4 programs, with regular education sessions and monthly safety checks. Other areas have struggled to keep their Option 4 program going or

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have stopped it altogether due to few tickets written, and/or low attendance at education sessions. Still other areas don't know about the Option 4 program, or have heard of it and are eager to get this type of traffic safety partnership in their community. The Alberta Traffic Safety Plan designates March and October for occupant restraint activities, including seat belt, child safety seat and booster seat enforcement and education. These designated months are a perfect fit with an Option 4 program.

Sustaining Option 4 in Your Area

- Visit www.albertaseatbelts.ca/option4 to update your Option 4 presentation and resources. Download and print handouts for Option 4 education sessions from the website.
- "Recommendation for Withdrawal" forms are required to sustain an Option 4 program. These forms are available from the AORP Program Coordinator by phone 780-412-5553, or email info@albertaseatbelts.ca. The forms are supplied in packages of 50 and sent by mail.
- Information about upcoming education sessions in all areas can be emailed to the Coordinator to be posted on the AORP website.

Starting Option 4 in Your Area

- Go to www.albertaseatbelts.ca/option4 to review all Option 4 information. You will find:
 - Training materials for enforcement personnel.
 - A presentation for delivering an Option 4 education session.
 - Information on ordering the DVD for the education session.
 - The handouts needed for the Option 4 safety check and the education sessions. These include the Child Safety Seat YES Test series, and the Child Safety Seat Information series.
- Bring together health, enforcement, and other community partners to discuss how to organize and deliver Option 4 in your area. Ideas include:
 - Plan a safety check in March (and/or October), with one or more education session(s) in the following months. Give information about the Option 4 education session(s) at the safety check and invite ticketed drivers to attend.
 - Promote the education session(s) to parents and expectant parents in your area who do not receive tickets.
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Stopping Option 4 in Your Area

- Bring together health, enforcement and other community partners involved in Option 4. If any existing partners are unable to continue the program, but there is still a desire to have the program, determine who will be the new partners.
- If there's agreement to stop the program:
 - Contact AORP Coordinator to advise that the Option 4 program will be stopping and which areas/regions this will impact.
 - Determine which partner is responsible for retention/disposal of "Recommendations for Withdrawal" forms. These contain confidential information and must be retained or disposed of accordingly. Health or enforcement partners must follow their specific policy for retention/disposal of confidential documents. Should you have questions, please contact AORP Coordinator.
 - Return unused "Recommendation for Withdrawal" forms to AORP Coordinator.

Looking Ahead

- The Alberta Occupant Restraint Program continues to work on issues regarding child safety seats and the safe transportation of children in motor vehicles. Resources for parents and professionals can be found on the AORP web site at www.albertaseatbelts.ca. A new enforcement training presentation has just been posted!
- AORP continues to support the introduction of booster seat legislation in Alberta. Thank you for your continuing commitment to transporting children safely on our Alberta roadways.

If you have questions, please contact:

Joyce McBean-Salvador
AORP Provincial Coordinator
Phone number: 780-412-5553
info@albertaseatbelts.ca

**What's holding

you back?**