

USER ACCEPTANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SEAT BELT SPEED LIMITERS ON  
RECREATIONAL OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES

Project Number: 6000.02 Task 1: Field Trial Focus Groups  
MODERATOR GUIDE

## **1. Review Purpose, Objective, and Scope of the Focus Group**

[Use name tags with first names]

### **Introductions and rules**

- Moderator introduces self and aides

The purpose of this focus group is for us to learn more about how people are using their off-road vehicles (ROVs) and seat belts. The Federal Government would like to explore the feasibility of using restraint system requirements related to seat belt speed limiter technology in all recreational off-road vehicles. The overall objective of the study is to explore the system's potential effectiveness, as well as user acceptance issues, and factors that would increase the likelihood of drivers accepting this type of device in their vehicles.

You have been selected to participate in this focus group because you indicated that you are a regular user of an off-road vehicle. We would like to understand how you use your vehicle, what specific safety features you have, and how/if you use them. We also want you to try out a specific feature that exists on the CanAm Commander 1000. This feature is known as a speed limiter.

The speed limiter system does not prevent vehicle motion, but limits the speed to 6 mph if the driver is not wearing a seat belt. You will get an opportunity to try out this feature shortly and share your opinions about the limiter with us.

How many of you have taken part in a focus group?

Before we begin our discussion, I would just like to review some basic issues and guidelines.

- a. Focus groups have certain rules or etiquette that we follow
  - i. No one will be judging your responses
  - ii. We need to hear about your feelings and opinions. We are not here to reach consensus, but to hear and discuss a range of views. There is no “right” or “wrong” answers.
  - iii. We want to encourage cross talk among group, not to/from moderator; the moderator will merely guide the discussion to cover the topics we need to hear about.
  - iv. We want to give everyone the opportunity to speak - it is important to hear from everyone.
  - v. The session is being audio-taped for offline analysis; participation is voluntary.
  - vi. Refreshments, rest rooms, and breaks are available and planned.
- b. We hope that you will feel free to be completely honest in this discussion. Your responses will NOT be shared with anyone other than those people working on the project. Your name and any other identifying information will not be used in any report that we prepare about these focus groups.
- c. Please respect the privacy of the other people in this group by not discussing what is said here with anyone outside the group or in public..
- d. Our objective is to gain insights on how people would feel about this type of system. As we go through the session, I will guide us along various topics, but you are the **experts** and will be doing most the talking.

## 2. Self Introductions and Ice Breaker

Go around to each person in turn.

Round of introductions of participants (first names) -

- a. What is the make and model of the ROV that you own?
- b. How long have you owned the ROV and how often do you use it?
- c. What kind of features does it have? Have you made any special modifications been made to it?
- d. Can you describe ways that you use it?
  - Recreational
  - Work
  - Both
  - Other

### **3. Pre-Ride Discussion**

#### **Driving Behavior**

- a. What types of terrain do you usually travel over?
  - i. Surfaces (grass, mud, sand, gravel, ruts and bumps)
  - ii. Slopes (up and down, along the side)
- b. How do you decide how to handle hills and cross slopes?
- c. While driving your ROV, what are the specific activities or tasks that you try to accomplish?
- d. What kind of maneuvers do you make while driving your ROV?
- e. What are your typical speeds?
- f. How often do you ride alone vs. with other riders?
- g. Have you ever had any accidents or close calls?
  - Do you know of others who have?

#### **Seat Belt Use**

- a. If you have a seat belt system in the vehicle, under what conditions do you usually use it? Or not use it?
  - i. How often?  
(Never)
    - i. Can you explain why you do not to use the seat belt?
      - 1. Uncomfortable
      - 2. Inconvenient
      - 3. Not dangerous
      - 4. No need
      - 5. Experience/Driving Ability
      - 6. Other
    - ii. Can you think of any driving conditions where you would use a seat belt?
- c. Do you think wearing a seat belt changes the speeds at which you drive? How?
- d. What do you feel is the likelihood that you will be involved in a crash/rollover while driving your ROV? Under what conditions?
- e. Do you feel that a seat belt would provide you with some protection during a crash?

- i. How effective do you think a seat belt would be if you had some kind of accident?

#### **4. Hands-On Field Task**

Now, I would like you each to have some experience driving the ROV and with the Speed Limiter. Each of you will go outside with \_\_\_\_\_ and have an opportunity to drive the Commander. We have set up a circuit comprised of several “stations” separated by various distances. When you reach a station we will ask you to accomplish a task that will require you to get out of the ROV. For example, you will drive out to a station (possibly a hoop with a number of golf balls lying in the center of it) and retrieve one item from it. You will need to exit the vehicle, retrieve the item, and then get back in and drive back to the starting point.

Once you get outside, you receive brief instruction on the key controls on the ROV (e.g., gas, brake, seatbelt, gear shift). I will ask that you do not speak to each other about your experience with the Commander until everyone has had an opportunity to drive it.

Once you all have participated in this exercise, we will come back here and I will ask you to provide some feedback on your experiences.

See document titled “6000.02 Hands-On Field Task Script”

#### **5. Post-Task Discussion**

##### **General discussion on tasks and performance**

- a. Describe your experience with the Commander as you performed the task under the various conditions?
  - a. Self Selected speed
  - b. 6 mph limit
  - c. 10 mph limit
  - d. 15 mph limit
- b. Were any of the 3 unbelted trial speeds similar to speeds that you drive when on your own ROV?

- c. Would you typically wear a belt when traveling at any of those speeds?
- d. If you were belted, would you have selected a higher traveling speed?
- e. Of the 3 unbelted trial runs, would you have been more comfortable wearing a seat belt?
  - a. Did you feel unsafe at any time?

### **Seat belt Use**

- a. Did wearing the seat belt impact your ability to complete the tasks?
  - a. If so, how?
- b. Relative to these tasks, under what conditions would you elect to use your seat belt?
  - a. Why?
    - i. Steep inclines?
    - ii. Higher speeds?

### **Seat belt Speed Limiter**

- a. Were you ever frustrated while performing the tasks during the hands-on exercises?
  - a. If so, why?
- b. Did the presence of the seat belt speed limiter influence your ability to conduct specific tasks or activities?
  - a. If so, how?
- c. Would the presence of this system change your behavior with regard to wearing a seat belt?
  - a. Why? Or Why not?
- d. How would you feel about the seat belt speed limiter as a feature in your ROV?
  - a. What are the pros?
  - b. What are the cons? Are there any unintended consequences?
- c. Do you feel that the limit of 6 mph is set for a reasonable speed for unbelted drivers?

- a. Why? Or Why not?
  - i. What about?
    - 1. 10 mph
    - 2. 15 mph
    - 3. 25 mph
  - ii. Do you think it should be set at a higher speed? If so, what is a reasonable speed for unbelted drivers?
- d. Knowing what you know now, how would the presence of a speed limiter feature in the vehicle influence your decision to use a seat belt?
  - a. Full time?
  - b. Part time?
  - c. Under various conditions?
- e. How would the presence of a speed limiter influence your decision to purchase this type of vehicle in the near future?

***If impression overall is negative, then ask***

- f. What might make your impression shift in the opposite direction?
- g. What changes to the system design would improve it?
  - a. Why? \_
- h. If there was a speed limiter on your ROV, would you disable it?
  - b. How?

**Passenger Seat belt use**

- a. How often do you ride alone vs. with passengers
  - i. Who?
  - ii. When?
- b. For those of you who drive with passengers, do your passengers typically wear a seat belt?
  - i. If yes, How often?
  - ii. If not, do you know why?
- c. Do you feel the presence of the seat belt speed limiter as a feature in your ROV influences their belt use?
  - i. Why?
  - ii. Why not?
- d. Do you require your passenger to wear a seat belt?

- i. Why?
- ii. Why not?

### **Alternative Ideas**

- a. Can you suggest any other ideas that might improve people's willingness to wear seat belts?

## **6. Wrap-up**

Would anyone have anything else they would like to mention about seat belt speed limiter system before we conclude the focus group? Are there any issues that we have not touched on?

### **Closing Remarks**

Thank you for your time. What we have heard and learned about today will help us assess the feasibility of this system as an effective way to reduce injuries related to crashes.

- Instruct participants as to how they will be reimbursed for their time.