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**2021 CIOT Talking Points**

Law enforcement agencies across the nation are joining together for the annualClick It or Ticket seat belt enforcement mobilization May 24 – June 6.

The campaign, funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA), combines increased enforcement with effective communication to road users on the importance of buckling up.

According to NHTSA, motorists are 75 percent less likely to be killed in a rollover crash if buckled up.

A seat belt provides the best chance of preventing injury and death if involved in a crash. Anyone can be involved in a crash at any time, so make buckling up the first thing you do when entering a vehicle.

**Proper fit**

According to NHTSA, when worn correctly, seat belts are proven to reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat occupants by 45 percent and by 60 percent in pickup trucks, SUVs and minivans.

Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs (not the stomach) and the shoulder belt lays across the chest (not the neck).

Properly positioned seat belts spread the crash forces over a wide area of the body, putting less stress on any one part.

**Kentucky information**

Kentucky’s seat belt usage rate increased with the passage of the primary law from 67.2 percent in 2006 to 89.7 percent in 2019. *(NOTE: A 2020 survey was not completed due to COVID.)*

Even though more people are buckling up, Kentucky experiences far too many deaths which could be avoided with the simple use of a seatbelt.

Of the 783 roadway deaths last year in Kentucky, 597 were occupants of motor vehicles. Of those killed in motor vehicle crashes, 342 were not wearing a seat belt, or properly in a car seat or booster seat.

Of the 597 killed in motor vehicle crashes, 261 occurred at night (6 p.m. – 5:59 a.m.). Of those, 162 were unrestrained.

Drivers are responsible for making sure everyone in the vehicle is buckled up and will be fined for each person that is not wearing a seat belt.

**Nighttime**

Because nighttime passenger vehicle occupants are among those least likely to buckle up and most likely to die in crashes when unrestrained, nighttime enforcement has become a priority of the Click It or Ticketmobilization*.*

According to NHTSA, more than half of those killed at night are unrestrained.

Despite the low traffic volume, fatal crashes are three times higher nationwide at nighttime versus daytime.

**Law enforcement**

Law enforcement personnel frequently see motorists who are injured or killed due to lack of seat belt, child seat or booster seat use.

Click It or Ticket isn’t about the citations; it’s about increased awareness and saving lives. Law enforcement would rather write a ticket than make a death notification.

We’re asking all drivers to make good decisions when behind the wheel. Buckling up is the simplest act you can do to reduce your chance of injury or death.

**Children**

According to NHTSA, car crashes are a leading cause of death for children age 1 to 13.

According to NHTSA, child seats are 71 percent effective in reducing infant deaths, 54 percent effective in reducing toddler deaths and 67 percent effective in reducing the need for hospitalization.

According to NHTSA, the use of belt-positioning booster seats lowers the risk of injury to children age 4 to 7 in crashes by 59 percent compared with the use of vehicle seat belts.

In Kentucky, of the 597 motor vehicle occupants who died in 2020, six were children age nine and under. Four of those six were improperly restrained.

**Pickup Trucks**

Kentucky has a particularly low seat belt usage rate for pickup trucks. Pickup truck drivers and passengers have an 83.7 percent usage rate, compared to passenger car occupants with a 90.5 percent usage rate.

Some pickup truck occupants think they don’t need to wear seat belts because they believe the large vehicle will protect them in a crash; however, no matter the type of vehicle, a seat belt is the most effective way to help prevent injury or death.