



NEWS RELEASE

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Georgia Kicking Off Statewide Seatbelt Enforcement Campaign Through Memorial Day

Click It or Ticket Program Will Run May 16 to June 5

(ATLANTA) One of the busiest travel holidays of the year is once again uniting statewide law enforcement in an effort to make sure all Georgia motorists and their passengers are buckled up.

The Governor's Office of Highway Safety's Click It or Ticket campaign will include police officers, deputies and troopers from every corner of the state. Beginning May 16, GOHS will air special PSA's on both radio and television and beginning May 23, local law enforcement will kick off CIOT enforcement efforts. Both the media and enforcement campaigns will run through June 5.

"Traffic will be heavy throughout the Memorial Day holiday weekend and the Georgia State Patrol reminds drivers to also allow extra time to reach their destinations as they take to the highways," Colonel Mark W. McDonough, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Safety, said. "Troopers will be patrolling for unsafe drivers on the interstates and secondary roads throughout the weekend. They will concentrate on locating impaired drivers, unrestrained drivers and passengers, speeding violations as well as distracted drivers during their holiday patrols."

Data shows that unrestrained fatalities are still at an unacceptable level. From 2007 to 2013, Georgia averaged 466 unrestrained traffic deaths per year. Currently, when seatbelt use is known following a fatal crash, 51 percent of the state's traffic deaths were restrained and 49 percent were not.

"Unfortunately, Georgia experienced an increase in traffic fatalities for the first time in several years in 2016 and while it can't be said for sure that each death could've been prevented by a buckled seatbelt, it is a fact that properly buckled belts can help save lives," GOHS Director Harris Blackwood said. "And when a busy travel holiday like Memorial Day comes along, a buckled seatbelt is even more important. And because Georgia has a primary belt law, that means an officer can stop any driver they observe as unbuckled. During Click It or Ticket, that will ring especially true."

Nationwide, while 88.5 percent of passenger vehicle occupants buckle up in 2015, almost 50 percent of occupants in fatal crashes were not restrained. In some states, that rate is as high as 70 percent. In 2014, nearly half of the 21,022 people killed in traffic crashes were unrestrained. However, during the nighttime hours from 6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m., that number increases to 57 percent. That is why Click it or Ticket is conducted day and night.

For more information on Georgia's Click It or Ticket campaign and other seatbelt safety facts, visit www.gahighwaysafety.org or call 404-656-6996. For more information about the campaign around the country, visit www.nhtsa.gov/ciot.

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