



CITY NEWS

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DATE: May 24, 2010
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Click It or Ticket project targets seatbelt usage Program draws attention to consequences of not wearing seatbelts

The Wichita Police Department today begins a two week program designed to encourage drivers and passengers in vehicles to wear seatbelts. The National Click It or Ticket event runs from May 24th through June 6th.

“All vehicles come with seatbelts. Unfortunately, not all vehicles come with drivers and passengers who use them,” said Wichita Police Department Accident Follow-Up Unit Lieutenant Joe Schroeder. “Because high schools in the area are ending their spring semester, and since the summer driving season will begin later this week, the Wichita Police Department is encouraging citizens to buckle up before they hit the road. That one small ‘click’ could save you money, maybe even save your life.”

According to data compiled by the Kansas Department of Transportation, the seat belt usage rate in Kansas increased from 75 percent in 2007 to 77.4 percent in 2008. However, Kansas still lags behind the national seatbelt usage rate of 83 percent.

Data also show that 61 percent of those killed in passenger vehicle crashes in Kansas during 2007 were not buckled up, and that 89 percent of those who were unharmed in injury or fatal crashes were using seat belts.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, nationwide men between the ages of 18 and 34 are the least likely population group to wear seatbelts. In 2009, 388 Kansans died in vehicle crashes statewide. Of that total, 271 were not wearing seatbelts. Studies have

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shown that about half of those lives could have been saved had they been wearing seat belts at the time of the crash.

“Clearly, thousands of lives are saved each year because drivers and their passengers are belted in. Many of those lives were children who were properly restrained and survived a crash that would have been fatal for an unrestrained child,” said Schroeder.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, child safety seats reduce the risk of death in passenger car crashes by 71% for infants, and by 54% for toddlers ages 1 to 4 years. Moreover, according to researchers at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, for children 4 to 7 years booster seats reduce the risk of injury by 59% compared to seat belts alone.

“As the summer months begin, we strongly encourage all citizens to use seatbelts and safety restraints at all times while on the road”, said Schroeder. “It only takes a moment to ensure you and your loved ones have a summer filled with fun and not tragedy.”

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