

Colorado ramps up seat belt enforcement May 20-June 3

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

The Colorado State Patrol and 63 law enforcement agencies across Colorado are joining the nationwide Click It or Ticket campaign by increasing enforcement of seat belt and child passenger safety laws.

The ramped up enforcement takes place Monday, May 20 through Sunday, June 2. The goal is to get more Coloradans to buckle up and ultimately save lives across the state.

In 2012, 159 people who weren't buckled up lost their lives in traffic crashes on Colorado roadways, which is down from 185 unrestrained fatalities in 2011. The Colorado Department of Transportation is focusing its public awareness campaign on male pickup truck drivers between the ages of 18 and 34 as they have the highest propensity for not wearing their seat belts.

Sixty-one men between the ages of 18-34 who died in a crash were not wearing a seatbelt. Pickup trucks have a seat belt usage rate of 72 percent, which is 10 percent less than the state average usage rate.

"We've made progress over the past year in reducing the number of people killed on Colorado roadways, but still far too many motorists aren't buckling up," said Darrell Lingk, CDOT's director of highway safety.

"The Click It or Ticket campaign gives us an opportunity to remind everyone that seat belts save lives and that there are serious risks when people don't buckle up."

High-visibility enforcement such as the Click It or Ticket mobilization is credited with increased seat belt use in Colorado. Since Click It or Ticket started in 2002, seat belt use has increased from 72 percent to 82 percent in 2012.

There has also been a 58 percent decline in unrestrained deaths—380 in 2002 and 159 in 2012. During the Click It or Ticket enforcement, the Colorado State Patrol also will be asking motorists to buckle up with radio messages as part of its commercial vehicle summer-long

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safety campaign which reminds motorists to give trucks more room on roadways.

“Troopers at the Colorado State Patrol are reminded nearly every day of the needless deaths that occur when someone neglects to wear a seat belt. We are relieved when we respond to a crash where everyone survives because they took two seconds to buckle up,” said Colonel Scott Hernandez, chief of the Colorado State Patrol.

“We would much rather write a seat belt citation than a fatal crash report. That means no excuses and no warnings if you’re not buckled up.”

Last year during the May Click It or Ticket enforcement period, 8,803 seat belt violations were issued.

Colorado’s seat belt laws include:

Adults—Colorado has a secondary enforcement law for adult drivers and front-seat passengers. Drivers can be ticketed for violating the seat belt law if they are stopped for another traffic violation. Click It or Ticket enforcement focuses on speeding and aggressive drivers. Drivers who are stopped for a traffic violation and are not using a seat belt will be ticketed. The minimum fine is \$65.

Teens—Colorado’s Graduated Drivers Licensing law requires that all drivers under 18 and their passengers, no matter what their age, wear seat belts. This is a primary enforcement, meaning teens can be pulled over simply for not wearing a seat belt or having passengers without seat belts.

Children—Colorado’s Child Passenger Safety law is primary enforcement, meaning the driver can be stopped and ticketed if an officer sees an unrestrained or improperly restrained child under age 16 in the vehicle.

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