



MEDIA RELEASE

May 17, 2010

Click It or Ticket Campaign

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, Maryland State Police Leonardtown Barrack and the Department of Defense Police at Patuxent River Naval Air Station will join other law enforcement agencies around in Maryland and around the Nation and participate in the Click It or Ticket Safety Belt Enforcement Campaign. Click It or Ticket is an aggressive national seat belt enforcement mobilization campaign designed to increase seat belt use and reduce highway fatalities and injuries.

Law enforcement agencies throughout Maryland began their education and enforcement campaigns in early May and will run those campaigns through early June of 2010. In 2009, Maryland achieved an all time high observed seat belt use rate among adult front seat drivers and passengers of more than 94 percent.

This year Click It or Ticket night time enforcement, May 28, 2010 through May 31, 2010 is a key for the 2010 campaign. "Nighttime traffic safety is a priority for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The nighttime passenger vehicle occupant fatality rate is about three times higher than the daytime rate. The data shows a decline in belt use among fatally injured passenger vehicle occupants as it gets later in the evening, reaching the lowest levels between midnight and 4:00 a.m. (National Highway Transportation Safety Administration – NHTSA, 2010) Increasing seat belt usage among occupants traveling at night could substantially lessen injury and fatality rates.

Experience has shown campaigns which incorporate high visibility enforcement efforts can substantially increase safety belt use rates in a very short period of time, thereby dramatically reducing traffic related injuries and fatalities. "Buckling a seat belt costs takes just a moment and it's the single most effective traffic safety device ever invented." (Jackie Beckman, CTSP Coordinator St. Mary's Highway Safety Program)

Maryland law requires the driver, front passenger, and other passenger seated anywhere in a vehicle who are under the age of 16 to wear a seatbelt. A child under the age of 8, shorter than 4'9", or weighing 65 pounds or less is required to be seated in an approved child safety seat. Law enforcement throughout St. Mary's County will be diligent in educating citizens as well as enforcing seatbelt and child safety seat laws.

"Injuries as a result of motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of death among children in America. Drivers, do not risk your life or the lives of those who travel in your vehicle. Insist everyone in your vehicle is properly restrained in a seatbelt or child safety seat before you start your engine." (Lt. Michael Thompson, Barrack Commander, MSP Leonardtown)

“Time and time again we have seen just how effective using seatbelts and child safety seats are in reducing injuries and saving the lives of those involved in motor vehicle collisions. We encourage responsible driving. Responsibility includes assuring the safety of those who travel in our vehicles. Be responsible and safe - buckle up.” (Sheriff Timothy K. Cameron)