



MEDIA RELEASE

OHIO TRAFFIC SAFETY OFFICE

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ODPS JOINS NATIONAL MOBILIZATION FOR SEAT BELT SAFETY

Mobilization Begins May 18th

(COLUMBUS) – Ohio is again participating in the national *Click It or Ticket* seat belt mobilization to remind Ohioans to buckle up – day and night. The Ohio Department of Public Safety's (ODPS) Ohio Traffic Safety Office (OTSO) leads this campaign each year because buckling up saves lives.

“Consistent research from our national partners has shown that fewer people are buckling up at night, when the risk of a being in a fatal crash is greatest,” said ODPS Director Henry Guzmán. “That’s why we’re reminding everyone that wearing a seat belt is not just a safety recommendation, it’s the law.”

More than 900 law enforcement partners around the state, including the Ohio State Highway Patrol, will be aggressively enforcing the law during the mobilization, which runs May 18 through the 31st.

In 2008, 414 of the people killed in crashes on Ohio’s roads were not were not wearing seat belts. A U.S. Department of Transportation study released last week estimates that 1,652 lives could be saved and 22,372 serious injuries avoided each year on America’s roadways if seat belt use rates rose to 90 percent in every state.

Ohio’s seat belt use rate is approximately 83 percent. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recently estimated that Ohio would save 57 lives, 1,386 serious injuries and \$263 million in costs each year if the seat belt use rate went up by seven percentage points (to 90 percent).

Law enforcement and other safety partners will be holding awareness events and educational activities to stress the importance of seat belt use around the state during the mobilization. OTSO is generating high-visibility awareness by providing magnets with the *Click It or Ticket* message to be placed on vehicles, as well as supporting NHTSA’s national media with statewide placement of messages on television, radio and news paper ads. For more information on the *Click It or Ticket* mobilization and other programs run by the Ohio Traffic Safety Office, log onto <http://ohiohighwaysafetyoffice.ohio.gov/>.

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ODPS works to reduce deaths and injuries and improve the quality of life for Ohioans through the coordinated efforts of its Divisions, which include the Ohio State Highway Patrol and Ohio Traffic Safety Office. The Ohio State Highway Patrol enforces traffic laws and OTSO funds the efforts of OVI Task Forces and other grants for law enforcement to combat impaired and unsafe driving. OTSO also promotes educational programs, coalition-building efforts and campaigns for highway safety.