



MEDIA RELEASE

OHIO TRAFFIC SAFETY OFFICE

www.highwaysafety.ohio.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 18, 2008

Contact: Lindsay Komlanc, ODPS Media Relations Director
(614) 752-4325

ODPS Launches 100 Days of Summer Safety Program *Asks All Safety Partners to Participate to Keep 'Em Safe!*

(COLUMBUS) – The official start of summer is just days away and the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) wants to have the safest summer on record. The Department is launching the “100 Days of Summer” safety program aimed at reducing fatalities and injuries on Ohio roads caused by impaired driving and failing to buckle up.

The Department’s Ohio Traffic Safety Office (OTSO, formerly the Governor’s Highway Safety Office), the Division of EMS and the Ohio State Highway Patrol are teaming up and coordinating with other safety partners to remind motorists that simple steps like not driving impaired and buckling up will save lives.

In 2007, from June 21 through September 23, there were 424 fatalities on Ohio’s roads. That means one person was killed in a motor vehicle crash every five hours last summer. Of those fatalities, 133 people of those who had seat belts available were not wearing them, and there were 165 fatalities and more than 3,800 crashes that were alcohol-related during that time period.

“Summer should be a time for fun, relaxation and vacations, but one thing that should never be relaxed is safety,” said ODPS Director Henry Guzmán. “A disproportionate number of deaths occur on our roadways during the summer months and we must reverse this trend.”

Starting the week of June 21, OTSO will post a comparison of the number of traffic deaths that occurred on Ohio’s roads each day during the summer of 2007 with the provisional fatality reports each day of the summer of 2008.

-more-



MEDIA RELEASE

OHIO TRAFFIC SAFETY OFFICE

www.highwaysafety.ohio.gov

 OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Ted Strickland, Governor Henry Guzmán, Director

ODPS Launches 100 Days of Summer Safety Program

June 18, 2008

Page Two

“The Ohio Traffic Safety Office is working to identify key areas – like impaired driving and seat belt use – to target at critical times during the year to decrease deaths and injuries on Ohio’s roads,” said Tina O’Grady, administrator of OTSO. “To truly make an impact, we need all of our safety partners working together to help us make this the safest summer on record.”

Throughout the summer, expect the Ohio State Highway Patrol to be highly visible on the state’s highways. Local law enforcement who receive grants from OTSO through OVI (Operating a Vehicle while Impaired) Task Forces and for high-visibility enforcement of key safety issues will be joining the effort along local roads, looking for impaired driving and other dangerous behaviors. The Department’s Ohio Investigative Unit will be focusing on underage drinking this summer as well.

Partners like Safe Community organizations, Fire and EMS will also be working to spread the word and remind motorists of the importance of safety on the road this summer.

###

ODPS works to reduce alcohol-related deaths and injuries on Ohio’s roads through the coordinated efforts of all of its Divisions. The Ohio Investigative Unit enforces liquor, tobacco and food stamp laws in liquor permit premises and the Ohio State Highway Patrol which enforces traffic laws. The 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 focused on highway safety. The Division of EMS incorporates safe driving messaging with their annual injury prevention efforts during Trauma Season; a time when injuries tend to peak for individuals during the summer months.