



ONTARIO POLICE DEPARTMENT

2500 South Archibald Avenue Ontario, Ca. 91761 (909) 395-2001

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Fred Alvarez, Corporal

Desk: (909) 395-2945

Email: falvarez@ontariopolice.org

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Approved by: Sgt. J. Higbee

New “Coast to Coast” Seat Belt Enforcement Effort Aims to Increase Click It or Ticket Participation, Save Lives

ONTARIO CA – From May 23 to June 5, 2016, local law enforcement personnel will participate in the national Click It or Ticket campaign in an effort to save lives through increased seat belt use. This education enforcement period comes ahead of the Memorial Day holiday, one of the busiest travel weekends of the year.

According to research conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, while 88.5 percent of passenger vehicle occupants buckled up in 2015, almost 50 percent of occupants of fatal crashes nationwide are not restrained. In some states, the rate is as high as 70 percent unrestrained in fatal crashes. In California, more than a half million people travel our roadways at grave risk without proper restraints. These facts gravely highlight the need for increased education, awareness and enforcement and awareness of seat belt use.

This year, NHTSA is aiming to increase campaign participation even more by coordinating a “Coast to Coast” seat belt education and enforcement effort with the California Highway Patrol and law enforcement around the I-10, I-40, I-70 and I-80 corridors. Additionally, law enforcement agencies statewide are joining the Click It or Ticket effort to emphasize the “Coast to Coast” seat belt safety awareness campaign in all 50 states.

“As law enforcement, we have a special role in helping protect the safety of our citizens, from the East to the West Coast,” said Lieutenant John Duffield, Ontario Police Department. “Time after time, we see the deadly results that come from drivers and passengers refusing to wear a seat belt. Wearing a seat belt is one of the most important steps in increasing survivability in a crash. Our

job is to stop those who are not buckled up, and to keep them from repeating this potentially deadly mistake.”

In 2014, nearly half of the 21,022 passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes nationally were unrestrained, according to NHTSA. During the nighttime hours of 6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m., that number increased to 57 percent of those killed. Law enforcement agencies will write citations day and night, with a zero-tolerance approach.

“Hundreds of thousands of citizens will be traveling this Memorial Day weekend, as well as throughout the summer vacation season. We want to make sure that people are buckling up to keep themselves and their families safe. It is the greatest defense in a vehicle crash,” said Rhonda Craft, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety.

For more information on the Click It or Ticket campaign, please visit www.nhtsa.gov/ciot.