

ROAD TO SAFETY

Click It or Ticket Efforts Target Seat Belt Use

(NAPSA)—This May, law enforcement agencies across the country are launching *Click It or Ticket* campaigns—high-visibility efforts to enforce seat belt laws. Under the campaigns, many states will use newspapers, radio, TV and other media to broadly publicize their plans to increase enforcement and warn people to buckle up or get a ticket. Then they will begin the stepped-up enforcement, issuing tickets—not warnings—when people aren't wearing seat belts.

The *Click It or Ticket* campaigns will coincide with *Operation ABC Mobilizations*, nationwide efforts to enforce seat belt and child safety seat laws. Over 11,000 law enforcement agencies will participate in the *Mobilizations*, which will occur during Buckle Up America Week.

"This May, we will see an unprecedented level of law enforcement activity to enforce our nation's seat belt and child safety seat laws," says Jeffrey W. Runge, M.D., administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). "We know that *Mobilizations* and *Click It or Ticket* efforts work to prevent injury and save lives. The threat of a ticket gets people to buckle up themselves and their kids."

Law enforcement officers will be on special alert for unbuckled teenagers. Partly because of low seat belt use, traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for people 15 to 20 years old, according to NHTSA. In addition:

- Fatality rates for teenage drivers are four times higher than for older drivers.



Teenagers are less likely to buckle up than more experienced drivers.

- In 2000, two-thirds of the 16- to 18-year-olds killed or seriously injured in fatal car crashes were not wearing seat belts.

"Teenagers are at a deadly intersection of age and high risk behaviors," says Dr. Runge. "Car crashes are the number one killer of our young people, and we are using these *Mobilizations* and *Click It or Ticket* efforts to get the 'Buckle Up' message across to them."

Motor vehicle crashes take an economic toll as well as a human one. Crashes cost the U.S. \$150 billion a year, including \$17 billion in medical costs, NHTSA says. The agency also says that seat belts reduce the risk of being killed in a car crash by 45 percent to 60 percent and the risk of being injured by 50 percent to 65 percent.

To learn more about the *Operation ABC Mobilizations* or the *Click It or Ticket* campaigns, visit www.nhtsa.dot.gov.