

Click it or ticket: Multistate campaign to raise seat belt safety awareness

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 04 June 2021 04:18



Five states join New Mexico to increase seat belt use across state lines

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Department of Transportation and local law enforcement agencies join Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Utah, and Wyoming reminding travelers to buckle up. The ‘State2State Buckle Up’ campaign wants travelers to stay buckled in every state no matter how far they are traveling.

The campaign coincides with the start of the national Click it or Ticket seat belt enforcement period that started May 24. Participating states will alert travelers using social media and digital highway signs.

“Click It or Ticket is not about citations; it’s about saving lives,” Transportation Secretary Mike Sandoval said.

In 2019, there were 9,466 unbuckled people killed in crashes in the U.S. In New Mexico there were 141 traffic fatalities involving an unbuckled driver or passenger.

Drivers with out-of-state licenses were involved with 37.5 percent of all fatalities on interstates according to New Mexico data from 2016-2019. Of those fatalities, 42 percent were not restrained. In the fatal crashes involving out-of-state drivers, California, Arizona, Texas, and

Colorado had the most drivers in fatal crashes on interstates.

To help make New Mexico roads safer, the New Mexico Department of Transportation and statewide law enforcement agencies encourage all drivers and passengers to do their part and buckle up no matter what state they call home.

“As the summer travel season gets rolling, we are going to see more travelers from neighboring states in New Mexico,” Sandoval said. “We want those travelers to be safe and buckle up, so they don’t miss anything our beautiful state has to offer.

“Buckling up is the simplest thing you can do to prevent injury or death in a crash. Sadly, we see the results of not wearing seat belts all the time. We see the loss of life and often, these tragedies could have been prevented,” he said.

Seat belts reduce the risk of injury or death in a crash by 50 percent, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. New Mexico law states each occupant of a motor vehicle having a total weight of ten thousand pounds or less manufactured with safety belts in compliance with federal motor vehicle safety standard number 208, shall have a safety belt properly fastened about his body when the vehicle is in motion on any street or highway. New Mexico’s current seat belt use rate is 91.8 percent, which is above the national average of 90 percent.

State2State Buckle Up is a multi-state seat belt safety campaign led by local transportation and law enforcement agencies from New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Utah, and Wyoming. The summer-long seat belt awareness campaign launches alongside National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the New Mexico Click It or Ticket May seat belt enforcement period.

High-visibility seat belt enforcement is important 24 hours a day, but nighttime is especially deadly for unbuckled occupants. In 2019, 55 percent of passenger vehicle occupants killed at night between 6 pm and 6 am, were not wearing their seat belts.

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Learn more about the Click It or Ticket mobilization at nhtsa.gov/ciot.