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News Release

Click It or Ticket traffic enforcement campaign to begin May 18

Officers will enforce seat belts, child safety seats, speeding, distracted driving

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (May 15, 2020) — Starting next week, the Arkansas City Police Department will join almost 150 other law enforcement agencies in aggressively enforcing seat belt usage and other laws as part of the 2020 Kansas Click It or Ticket traffic enforcement campaign.

Beginning May 18 and continuing through May 31, drivers can expect increased police presence on city streets. This activity is supported by grants from the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT).

Also, police officers will conduct a daytime seat belt enforcement initiative on May 20. During this check lane event, officers will check drivers and vehicle occupants for seat belt and restraint compliance.

If officers observe other violations, they may stop the vehicle and speak with the driver or occupants.

“The police department is committed to making city streets safer through aggressive enforcement efforts aimed at seat belt use, child safety, speeding and distracted driving violators. We ask that all drivers in Arkansas City buckle up, slow down and drive with caution,” said Police Chief Dan Ward.

“Enforcement will occur around the clock. Seat belt use diminishes after nightfall, meaning the likelihood of unbelted crash injuries and deaths rise during those hours.”

The aim of Click It or Ticket is simple — to reduce drastically the number of preventable deaths and injuries that occur when unbelted drivers and passengers are involved in traffic crashes.

About 345 people are involved in 170 crashes each day in Kansas, according to KDOT. Only 7 percent of those who are not belted are likely to escape without injury. Half of all fatalities occur among those who are not wearing a seat belt. While seat belts might not always prevent a serious or fatal injury, no other piece of equipment within a vehicle provides more protection to its occupants.

Kansas’ overall adult seat belt compliance rate is 85 percent and ranges, by county, from 62 to 97 percent, with occupants in rural counties generally less likely to buckle up than those in urban counties.

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This rural-urban difference in rates of buckling up is especially problematic, according to KDOT, because rural roadway conditions are often less forgiving than those in urban areas, and the consequences of driver misjudgment — such as unsafe speed and failure to buckle up — are likely to be more severe in the event of a crash. Almost two-thirds of Kansas' fatality crashes occur on rural roadways, while these roads also account for only one-third of all crashes.

"We recognize that many of our citizens and businesses are experiencing a negative financial impact related to the coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, we will not be issuing citations with fines for seat belt violations during this increased enforcement period," Ward explained.

"We encourage all drivers wear their seat belts and we will continue to stop those in violation. However, we will only issue warnings for seat belt violations during the enforcement. Officers will take enforcement action for other violations and any criminal activity — such as driving under the influence — that is found during a stop for a seat belt violation warning. Buckle up, phone down and drive safe!"

For questions regarding either the Click It or Ticket traffic safety enforcement effort or the daytime seat belt enforcement initiative, call (620) 441-4447 or email dward@arkansascityks.gov.

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