



Susana Martinez
Governor

Alvin C. Dominguez
Transportation Secretary

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Press Release

Click It or Ticket Enforcement Underway in New Mexico

National Seat Belt Enforcement Mobilization May 21 – June 03, 2012

Santa Fe – Motorists who refuse to wear their seat belts – beware. The 2012 national *Click It or Ticket* seat belt enforcement mobilization kicked off May 21 to help save lives by cracking down on those who don't buckle up.

The New Mexico Department of Transportation, law enforcement officials, and traffic safety advocates are joining with other state and local law enforcement officers across the country to help save more lives by enforcing seat belt laws around the clock.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 2010 nationally, 61 percent of the 10,647 passenger vehicle occupants who were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes overnight (6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m.) were not wearing their seat belts at the time of the fatal crash, compared to 42 percent during the daytime hours. Due to increased overnight fatalities regarding unbelted drivers, nighttime enforcement operations will occur statewide in an effort to lower these rates.

“Many drivers and passengers on the roads still choose not to wear their seat belts, and all too often that can end in tragedy,” said Transportation Secretary Alvin Dominguez. “The goal of this traffic safety initiative is to save more lives, so law enforcement will be out enforcing seat belt laws around the clock.”

In 2011, more than 350 people died in fatal collisions on New Mexico roadways, and nearly half were not buckled up. Wearing a seat belt reduces the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent. New Mexico currently ranks seventeenth in the nation for overall seat belt use, and 90.5 percent of New Mexico motorists use seat belts according to the NMDOT Traffic Safety Division.

Seat belt use saves thousands of lives across America each year and the New Mexico Department of Transportation, New Mexico Department of Public Safety, and Safer New Mexico Now is helping spread the word.

While this year's *Click It or Ticket* enforcement mobilization runs from May 21 through June 3, including Memorial Day weekend, motorists should know that officers are out enforcing seat belt laws year-round. State law requires that every person in a vehicle be secured by a seat belt whether riding in the front or back seat and children are required to be in child safety seat at all

times. Fines and court costs for failing to fasten seat belts can be costly; in addition, a seat belt citation will add 2 points to your driver's license.

“Motorists should buckle up every trip, every time...even more important, consistent safety belt use will protect motorists from being ejected from a vehicle during a crash,” said State Police Chief Robert Shilling. “There really is no reason not to be buckled up; safety should be the number one priority.”

“This is one of the most successful campaigns to be a part of,” said Lisa Kelloff, Safer New Mexico Now President. “There's no doubt that seat belts save lives.”

Additionally, in an effort to promote occupant safety awareness NMDOT and Safer New Mexico Now will host several free child safety seat clinics throughout the state during the month of June. For more information about these occupant safety events call (800) 231-6145.

Contact: NMDOT Public Information Officer Manon Arnett at (575) 201-8283 or NMDPS Public Information Officer Lieutenant Robert McDonald at (505) 470-5662. NMDOT Web Site: <http://dot.state.nm.us/>.



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