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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**SHERIFF ANNOUNCES PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL SEAT BELT CAMPAIGN**

In a continuing effort to ensure traffic safety through education and enforcement, the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) will once again participate with other agencies across Colorado and the nation in the *Click It or Ticket* seat belt safety campaign that runs from **May 11 through May 31, 2015**.

Recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicates that only 84% of Americans routinely use seat belts and in Colorado, the percentage is even lower. Survey data from the Colorado Department of Transportation shows that only 82.9% of Colorado residents routinely use seat belts, though this figure has risen 10% since 2002. In 2012, 10,335 people who were killed in motor vehicle crashes were not wearing their seat belts, with the majority of fatalities occurring at night. ACSO deputies, in partnership with other Colorado law enforcement officers, will be working to keep fatality numbers down by enforcing seat belt laws.

**Seat Belt Laws/Ordinances in the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office Service Area (unincorporated Arapahoe County and contract cities/towns including Centennial, Bennett, Deer Trail, and Foxfield):**

- **Adults** – Arapahoe County and those cities/towns which have adopted traffic ordinances all have secondary enforcement laws for adult drivers and front-seat passengers. Drivers can be ticketed for violating the seat belt laws if they are stopped for another traffic violation. *Click It or Ticket* enforcement focuses on speeding and aggressive drivers. Drivers who are stopped for a traffic violation and are not using a seat belt will be ticketed.
- **Teens** – Colorado's Graduated Drivers Licensing (GDL) law requires all drivers under 18 and their passengers, no matter what their age, to wear seat belts. This is a primary enforcement, meaning teens can be pulled over simply for not wearing a seat belt or having passengers without seat belts.

**(More)**



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- **Children** – Colorado's child passenger safety law is primary enforcement, meaning the driver can be stopped and ticketed if an officer sees an unrestrained or improperly restrained child under age 16 in the vehicle.

#### **SEATBELT FACTS FROM THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION**

- Young adults are dying at a disproportionate rate because they are not wearing their seat belts. 62% of passenger vehicle occupants with ages ranging from 18 to 34 killed in crashes were not wearing their seat belts.
- Those who drive and ride in pickup trucks may think that their large vehicle will protect them more than other vehicles in a crash. This false sense of security may cause them to not wear their seat belts, but the stats show that this bravado is misplaced. 66% of pickup truck occupants who were killed were not buckled up. That's compared to 45% of car occupants who were killed while not wearing their seat belts.
- More men than women die every year in motor vehicle traffic crashes. In 2012, 65% of the 21,667 passenger vehicle occupants killed were men. Men also wore their seat belts less than women in fatal crashes – 56% of men were unrestrained, compared to 43% for women.
- Day or night, local law enforcement officers are on the lookout for those not wearing their seat belts – and for good reason. In 2012, 61% of passenger vehicle occupants killed at night (6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m.) were not wearing their seat belts.
- Local law enforcement officers are actually trained to spot seat belt violations at night, so just because it's dark, don't think they won't be able to spot unbelted drivers.

**Learn more about the *Click It or Ticket* mobilization and seatbelt safety across the nation at [www.nhtsa.gov/ciot](http://www.nhtsa.gov/ciot) and across Colorado at <https://www.codot.gov/safety/seatbelts-carseats>.**

For further information about this media release or the participation of the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office in this campaign, please contact Bureau Chief Glenn Thompson at 720-874-4023.

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