



**For Immediate Release:**

## **Odds Are, If You Don't Click It, You'll Get a Ticket**

*Officers will work nighttime seat belt enforcement shifts to address low belt use among nighttime drivers.*

UTAH – The odds you'll survive a lightning strike? Nine out of 10. The odds of dying in a car crash if you aren't wearing your seat belt? One in two. Officers from across the state will be working special nighttime Click It or Ticket seat belt enforcement shifts on March 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> to remind drivers that it's not worth the risk to play the odds by driving unbuckled. They'll be stopping and issuing tickets to drivers and passengers who aren't wearing their seat belts.

Seat belt use in Utah is lowest during nighttime hours. Over the past five years, 41.8% of nighttime deaths involve unrestrained occupants. And, despite the fact that 89% of crashes happen in the daytime, nighttime crashes contribute to 22% of Utah's total roadway fatalities. The seat belt use rate among motor vehicle occupants was 87.9% in 2016, which means there are approximately 500,000 Utahns who still drive unbuckled.

"Last year in Utah, a motor vehicle crash occurred every 8 minutes and a person was injured in a crash every 20 minutes," said Utah Highway Patrol Trooper Lawrence Hopper. "Every time you get in your vehicle, you're at risk to be involved in a crash. We want to remind everyone that the simple action of buckling up is the best way to protect yourself from serious injury or even death."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, studies have identified a number of factors that are likely to contribute to lower seat belt use at night. First, people who wear seat belts during the day may be less likely to buckle up at night because they know police are less likely to observe non-belt-use at night. Also, the demographics of nighttime drivers and passengers often differ significantly from daylight hours, with fewer high-use populations, like parents with children and older adults, but more of those who tend to engage in risk-taking behaviors like speeding, impaired driving, and non-use of seat belts.

In May of 2015, wearing a seat belt while driving became a primary enforcement law in Utah. In other words, drivers can now be pulled over solely for not wearing a seat belt.

Last year 280 people died in fatal collisions on Utah roads and highways, and nearly one third (80) of them were not restrained. Buckling up is one of the best ways to decrease injuries and deaths in motor vehicle crashes. Seat belts reduce the risk of injury and death by about 50% when used correctly, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Seat belts are the single most effective traffic safety device for preventing injury and death.

The Utah Department of Public Safety's Click It or Ticket Campaign is conducted in partnership with the Utah Department of Transportation and Zero Fatalities Program. It is a high visibility enforcement campaign that involves law enforcement statewide. Visit <http://clickitutah.org> for more information on Utah's seat belt laws.

To arrange an interview or ride along, contact Utah Highway Patrol Trooper Lawrence Hopper.

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