



News Release No. 23

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OPERATION AIR, LAND & SPEED YIELDS 6,853 VIOLATIONS AND ARRESTS ON INTERSTATES 81 AND 95

347 Drivers and Passengers Cited for Safety Belt Violations; Zero Traffic Fatalities

RICHMOND – Virginia State Police once again saturated the entire lengths of Interstates 81 and 95 during this year's second *Operation Air, Land and Speed* initiative. From border-to-border, motorists traveling the two north-south interstate corridors witnessed an increased presence of Virginia State Police during the two-day traffic safety campaign.

Operation Air, Land and Speed took place both Sunday, May 17, and Monday, May 18, 2009, on Interstate 81. Due to inclement weather, the enforcement operation was suspended Sunday on Interstate 95 and was only conducted on that interstate Monday, May 18.

The Virginia State Police operation coincided with the kick off of the national "Click It or Ticket" educational and enforcement mobilization. The traffic safety project, which runs May 18-31, 2009, is aimed at increasing seatbelt use in Virginia and ultimately saving lives. A total of 347 seatbelt violations were cited during *Operation Air, Land and Speed* with 178 of those citations issued on I-81 and another 169 citations issued on I-95.



"Saving lives and making our interstates safer for all motorists is the whole objective to the *Operation Air, Land and Speed* initiatives," said Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, Virginia State Police Superintendent. "It is troubling to see 347 individuals willingly risked their lives by not buckling up. Fastening a seatbelt takes only seconds to do and yet can result in securing a lifetime."

On I-81, troopers stopped 2,138 speeders and 234 reckless drivers. They also took six drunk drivers off the interstate and made 12 felony arrests. Total violations and arrests on I-81 during Sunday and Monday were 3,725.

On I-95, troopers stopped 1,386 speeders and 345 reckless drivers. They also took three drunk drivers off the interstate and made 11 felony arrests. Total violations and arrests on I-95 on Monday were 3,128.

There were zero traffic fatalities on either interstate during the operation.

This is the tenth time since 2006 that *Operation Air, Land and Speed* has focused on the I-81 and I-95 interstate corridors. A total of 18 operations have been conducted on Virginia interstates statewide since the campaign's inception in 2006 and have yielded 95,683 total summonses and arrests.

The comprehensive enforcement project utilizes troopers, supervisors, motorcycle units and motor carrier troopers. State police operational duties on other interstates, primary and secondary roads are not affected during the operation. Funding for the enforcement initiative is provided through federal highway safety monies.

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