



News Release No. 31

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### **15,800 TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS CITED BY VIRGINIA STATE POLICE DURING INDEPENDENCE DAY WEEKEND 10 Reported Deaths Resulting from Holiday Traffic Crashes**

RICHMOND – The July 4 holiday weekend proved a busy one for Virginia State Police statewide. Of the 562 traffic crashes that state police responded to during the three-day statistical counting period, preliminary reports indicate that nine of the crashes resulted in 10 deaths. In 2008, 10 people were killed over a four-day holiday weekend.\*

The nine fatal crashes occurred in the city of Norfolk and the counties of Accomack, Buchanan, Buckingham, Chesterfield, Henrico, Montgomery, Prince George and Rockingham. The fatal crash in Norfolk claimed two lives. Five of the nine crashes occurred on Friday, July 3, 2009.

Of the eight individuals killed in the seven crashes involving passenger vehicles, seven of those killed were not wearing safety belts. The Henrico County fatality involved a bicycle. The Chesterfield County fatality involved a motorcycle, in which the rider was wearing a helmet.

Alcohol was a factor in four of the fatal crashes. The 2009 Independence Day statistical counting period began at 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 3, 2009, and concluded at midnight Sunday, July 5, 2009.

“We had hoped to continue the declining trend in traffic fatalities during this past holiday weekend,” said Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, Virginia State Police Superintendent. “Unfortunately, a lack of seat belts and alcohol were common factors in the nine traffic crashes investigated statewide. Now that we are well into the summer travel season, motorists must make safe and sober choices when behind the wheel.”

In addition to responding and investigating more than 500 traffic crashes statewide, Virginia State Police also cited 7,390 speeders and 2,140 reckless drivers. Placed under arrest by state police were 129 drunken drivers. State police also cited 675 safety belt violations and 274 child safety seat violations.

During the holiday weekend, 75 percent of Virginia State Police’s uniformed workforce was working and participating in the annual *Operation C.A.R.E.*, an acronym for the Combined Accident Reduction Effort. The state-sponsored, national program emphasizes safe driving through the reduction of traffic injuries and fatalities, occupant restraint safety and impaired driving prevention.

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\*Traffic Crash Facts, Virginia Highway Safety Office, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

#### **STATEWIDE MEDIA CONTACTS:**

VSP HQ Ms. C.Geller (804)674-2789	Richmond (804)553-3445	Culpeper Sgt. Tyler (540)829-7713	Appomattox (434)352-7128	Wytheville Sgt. Conroy (276)223-4242	Chesapeake Sgt. Cotten (757)424-6827	Salem/Roanoke Sgt. Carpentieri (540)375-9598	Fairfax (804)674-2789
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