

## **Click It or Ticket Sample Op-Ed**

### **(Your Agency) To Lead Enforcement Activities to Save Lives on Virginia's Roadways**

In 2008, Virginia had a total of 821 traffic related fatalities, and while this is better than 2007's 1,026, there are still too many people dying. Many of these fatalities could be prevented by taking a few simple steps. Key among them is seat belt use. It is interesting to note, according to preliminary data from The Virginia Highway Safety Office at DMV, that of the 819 fatalities, 631 occurred in vehicles that were equipped with safety restraints, 342 or 54 percent were not wearing restraints. While there are a small number of fatal crashes that might be deemed "unsurvivable", the majority of them could have had different outcomes had restraints been used.

That is why (Your Agency) is partnering with law enforcement across Virginia and the nation to increase seat belt use with the Click It or Ticket Enforcement Mobilization in an effort to save more lives on Virginia's Roadways. Aggressive and stepped up law enforcement activities will be conducted during this mobilization May 18 – May 31, 2009.

Too many Virginians still take the attitude that it will never happen to them. But, fatal crashes can and do happen every day. Virginia has made a lot of progress, but there are still too many fatalities due to not wearing a seat belt in our state.

Men - especially younger men (between 18-34 years old) - are still much less likely to buckle up. In 2008, in Virginia, 61 percent of male drivers and 69 percent of male passengers between the ages of 18 and 34 who were killed were not wearing their seat belts at the time of the crash.

Clearly, regular seat belt use is the single most effective way to protect yourself and others to reduce injuries and fatalities in crashes. Of the passenger vehicle occupants involved in fatal crashes in Virginia in 2007, the 55 percent that were restrained survived the crash. When worn correctly, seat belts have proven to reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent - and by 60 percent in pickup trucks, SUV's and mini-vans.

Unfortunately, people still need a tough reminder that wearing a seat belt is the absolute best way to protect themselves during a crash, so no more warnings, and no more excuses for those not buckled up, law enforcement throughout Virginia will be out enforcing all traffic laws and will be issuing tickets for violations.

Wearing your seat belt costs you nothing, but not wearing in could cost you a ticket, or worse - your life. Please remember to buckle up day and night - Click It or Ticket.

For more information, please visit, [www.dmvnow.com/highwaysafety](http://www.dmvnow.com/highwaysafety)