

(This should be on your agency letterhead)

Click it or Ticket
Sample Op-Ed piece

(Your Agency) Will Join Virginia to Increase Seat Belt Usage *Click It or Ticket* begins May 24th

For you and your family, seat belts provide the best defense against impaired, distracted and aggressive drivers. In fact, wearing your seat belt is the single most effective crash protection available. In 2009, Virginia, had the highest recorded seat belt use rate in history at 82.3 percent. Even with that good news, 756 citizens lost their lives on Virginia roadways, of those, 333 individuals were not wearing seat belts at the time of the crash.

However, a seat belt can't prevent a serious injury or fatality unless it's used. That's where law enforcement becomes important. High visibility enforcement campaigns such as *Click It or Ticket* are credited with increasing Virginia's seat belt usage rate from 69.9 percent in 1999 to the observed rate in 2009 of 82.3 percent.

In spite of this dramatic increase, we can't afford to waiver on belt enforcement now. There are so many of Virginia's citizens lives yet to be saved, and by any measure, the personal and societal costs of those lives, if lost to us, are far too great to bear.

To protect local lives, (Your Agency) will join with law enforcement officers, highway safety officials, and safety advocates across Virginia and the nation in support of the 2010 *Click It or Ticket* Mobilization. From May 24th to June 6th, (Your Locality) motorists can expect to receive a ticket if they are not obeying traffic laws, they can also expect another ticket if they are not buckled up. Moreover, motorists can also expect to see (Your Agency) out in force-both day and night.

Because night time drivers are among those least likely to buckle up, enforcement of all traffic laws during the night time hours is becoming a hallmark of the *Click It or Ticket* Mobilization. In fact, during the 2009 year, 195 individuals died unbelted in crashes during the hours of 6:00pm-5:59am most of them young men.

Teens and young adults, who neglect to buckle up in greater numbers than any other age group, are also at an increased risk of dying in a crash. Sadly, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for American youth, exceeding all crime and disease related causes.

There's no question about it: Seat belts save lives. Spread the word to your family and friends to buckle up. You could save them the cost of an additional ticket. Even better: You could save a life. Remember: May 24th to June 6th, it's *Click It or Ticket*.

For more information contact: (Your agency PIO, website, or other individual who can field calls of question.)