

## **May 2014 Click It or Ticket Talking Points**

### **For media interviews, other outreach efforts**

- Thousands of law enforcement officers from across Virginia and the country are stepping up enforcement during the 2014 Click It or Ticket national mobilization from May 19 to June 1.
- All traffic violations will be enforced day and night during Click It or Ticket. Statistics show nighttime drivers are less likely to buckle up compared to daytime drivers. Local law enforcement officers are trained to spot seat belt violations at night, so just because it's dark, they can still observe unbelted drivers. In 2013 in Virginia, 144 (46 percent) of the unrestrained fatalities occurred between 6 p.m. and 3 a.m. Nationally in 2012, 61 percent of passenger vehicle occupants killed at night (6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m.) were not wearing belts.
- Last year in Virginia there were 310 unrestrained fatalities, which was 54 percent of all fatalities in vehicles equipped with safety restraints. Fatalities for unrestrained passenger vehicle occupants went up for the first time in five years in the U.S. in 2012 when 10,335 unbuckled passenger vehicle occupants died.
- Men aged 18 to 34 remain the biggest unbelted risk group, and more men than women die every year in motor vehicle crashes. In Virginia last year, 226 unrestrained fatalities (73 percent) were males while 82 (26 percent) were women. Nationwide in 2012, men also wore their seat belts less than women in fatal crashes – 56 percent of men were unrestrained, compared to 43 percent for women.
- Young adults are dying at a disproportionate rate because they are not wearing their seat belts. In the Commonwealth in 2013, 118 (38 percent) of those who died in unrestrained crashes were 21 to 35 years old. In the U.S. in 2012, 62 percent of 18- to 34-year-old passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes were not wearing belts.
- Those who drive and ride in pickup trucks may think that their large vehicle will protect them more than other vehicles in a crash. This false sense of security may cause them to not wear their seat belts, but the stats show that this bravado is misplaced. Nationwide, 66 percent of pickup truck occupants who were killed were not buckled up. That's compared to 45 percent of car occupants who were killed while not wearing their seat belts.
- Seat belts are the best defense in a crash and save thousands of lives every year. In 2012 in the United States, seat belts saved an estimated 12,174 people from dying. From 2008 through 2012 seat belts saved nearly 63,000 lives across the country.
- Virginia law requires seat belt use for drivers and front seat passengers 18 years of age and older, and all passengers younger than 18, but everyone riding in a motor vehicle should be properly buckled up to prevent injury or death during a crash. Those who don't wear seat belts are not only risking their own lives, but the lives of everyone inside the vehicle since their body becomes a missile during a crash.
- Virginia law requires officers to summons the driver if he or she is transporting a person under the age of 18 years of age who is not properly secured by an appropriate safety seat or safety belt system. Since this law is primary, officers don't need another reason to stop a vehicle if they believe there is an individual under the age of 18 who is not properly restrained.