



STEPHEN P MONTICELLI
Chief of Police

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

POLICE DEPARTMENT
101 North Main Street
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22802
Emergency 911
Non-Emergency 540-434-4436



KURT HODGEN
City Manager

May 19, 2016

Contact: Harrisonburg Police Department
Cpl. W E. Westfall, Jr. Special Operations Support
www.harrisonburgva.gov/police
(540) 437-2637

Click It or Ticket - HPD Urges Motorists to Wear Seatbelts

Harrisonburg, Va. Thousands of law enforcement officers from across Virginia and the country are stepping up enforcement during the 2016 Click It or Ticket national mobilization from May 23 to June 5. The Harrisonburg Police Department will be adding patrols the next two weeks with a focus on unrestrained drivers and passengers, as well as other traffic infractions.

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. Passengers within the vehicle younger than 18 need to be in a seat belt or safety seat system, and since this law is considered 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. "If you're not buckled up, you will get a ticket," warned HPD Corporal W. E. Westfall Jr. "Everyone, no matter if they are a driver or passenger, should always buckle up,"

Virginia's statewide seat belt use rate was 77.3 percent in 2014, 79.7 percent in 2013 and 78.4 percent in 2012. Last year in Virginia, 52 percent of all traffic fatalities, or 256 deaths, were unrestrained drivers and passengers. Also, 154 (60 percent) of the unrestrained deaths were people ages 21 to 50, and 65 percent were males. Of the 198 unbelted driver fatalities, 40 (20 percent) had been drinking. Almost half of the unrestrained fatalities in 2014 occurred at night, between 6 p.m. and 3 a.m.

Department pre- and post-seat belt surveys completed with each safety campaign shows motorists in Harrisonburg have always been 10 percent or more than the state average in seat belt usage.

The Harrisonburg Police Department along with DMV's Virginia Highway Safety Office encourages everyone on the road to wear their seat belts during every trip, day and night.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE