



## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 21, 2012

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### **Statewide Click It or Ticket Campaign Begins Today**

*Seat Belts Best Defense Against Distracted Drivers – Day and Night*

*Sacramento, Calif.* – Local law enforcement agencies and the California Highway Patrol will begin 'zero tolerance' enforcement of the state's occupant protection laws today as part of the statewide *Click It or Ticket* seat belt campaign. Law enforcement across the state will be looking for those not properly buckled.

Between May 21 and June 3, drivers and passengers can expect to receive tickets, not a warning, if officers find them out on the roads unbuckled. Police officers, Sheriff's deputies and California Highway Patrol officers will all be on the look out – both day and night. Nighttime passenger vehicle occupants are among those least likely to buckle up and most likely to die in crashes when unrestrained. In California in 2010, the number of those who died in crashes and were not wearing seat belts was nearly 60 percent higher at night.

"Wearing a seat belt is the number one defense to protect you in a car crash," said Office of Traffic Safety Director Christopher J. Murphy. "Your risk of death or serious injury is doubled by not wearing a seat belt. Those are odds no one should be willing to take. No risk is worth it where kids in car seats are concerned."

Although California boasts one of the highest seat belt use rates in the nation at 96.6 percent, that still leaves more than one million motorists who are at risk for serious injury and death. In 2010, estimates are that over 1,300 lives were saved by seatbelts in California. Another 110 could have been saved if seat belts had been used.

The cost of a seat belt ticket is at least \$159 on a first offense. The cost of failing to properly buckle up any child under the age of 16 is at least \$479 per child for a first offense, plus have a violation point added to their driver record, and \$1,079 or more on a second offense. If the parent is not in the car, the driver gets the ticket. If a driver is found to be in violation of both the seat belt and hands-free or no texting law, they can be cited for both infractions and with a combined ticket cost of \$318 or more.

This effort supports the California Strategic Highway Safety Plan's (SHSP) strategies to increase use of safety belts and child safety seats. The SHSP is a collaboration of Federal, State, County and local governments, as well as numerous advocate groups, businesses, and community organizations working together with the goal of "*Toward zero deaths, every 1 counts.*"

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