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Law Enforcement Cracks Down on Teen Drivers

MARCH 17TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

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Missouri - The State Highway Patrol will be stepping in and interfering with teens that refuse to wear their seat belts. MoDot has created many different partnerships with other programs that are against texting and driving, driving while under the influence, and not wearing seat belts. Still, there are many teens that will not follow this simple law.

Under Missouri's Graduated License Law, the use of a seat belt is required for all drivers and is considered a primary offense. Nearly 35% of teenage drivers do not buckle up, which is why the law enforcement feels like it is their duty to step in and lower that percentage by cracking down on the drivers that refuse to wear their seat belt.

"Many drivers take the attitude that 'it will never happen to me', especially teens, but fatal crashes happen every day to all types of people," said Leanna Depue, chair of the executive committee of the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety. "Law enforcement will ticket teens who aren't buckled up."

Many of the local schools have participated in Battle of the Belt and Team Spirit. Throughout the past couple of school years, local high schools have also become a large part in Arrive Alive, which was centered on the idea of buckling up and driving safely.

Every day, teens see public service announcements (PSAs) that tell them about the risk of texting and driving, drinking and driving, and not wearing a seatbelt. There have been many police officers, teachers, and representatives from different programs that come and speak to drivers and high school students about the importance of safe driving for the wellbeing of others. Still, there are many young drivers that refuse to buckle up.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has the slogan “Click It or Ticket” placed on signs, billboards, and on television commercials. The law states that every Missouri driver is required to wear a properly fastened seatbelt, but the law is focused mainly on teen drivers. After the law was passed, the percentage of teens that wore their seatbelts shot up by nearly 10%. Still, there are 35% of young drivers that do not wear their seatbelts, and a number of these drivers may live in our area.



Only 79% of Missouri citizens buckle up, compared to the 86% nationwide drivers. Seven out of ten Missouri drivers that were killed in a traffic accident in the last two years were unbuckled. Putting on your seatbelt only takes a couple of seconds and it reduces the risk of a fatal injury by 45%. It is no mystery why the seatbelt laws will be strictly enforced throughout the next couple of weeks.

So, remember to buckle up and drive safely!

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