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More Missourians Are Buckling Up!

SEPTEMBER 29TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Statewide survey shows a 1.5 percent increase

Results of a recent statewide survey reveal that Missouri drivers and passengers are buckling up more in 2016, but still have much room to improve.

Based on 123,678 observations of Missouri drivers and passengers in this year's statewide survey, the safety belt use rate is 81.4 percent, up 1.5 percent from 2015. This is still far behind the national average, which was 88.5 percent in 2015.

Safety belt usage ranged from a low of 63 percent in Jackson County to a high of 95 percent in Montgomery County. The survey also indicated that females tend to buckle up more than males with 85 and 78.6 percent respectively. Pickup truck drivers are only 69.7 percent likely to buckle up, while drivers of sport utility vehicles buckle up at 86.7 percent.

"It's vital that the driver and all passengers are buckled up every trip, every one, every time, day and night," said Bill Whitfield, chair of the executive committee for the coalition. "Ninety-four percent of the time driver error is responsible for a crash, and your safety belt is your best defense if a crash occurs."

Modern vehicles are safer than they have ever been. Integrated safety systems such as airbags and crumple zones have drastically increased chances of crash survival. However, all of these safety improvements are designed with the assumption that the occupants of a

vehicle are properly restrained with a safety belt. Not wearing a safety belt severely undermines a vehicle's ability to keep its passengers safe in a crash.

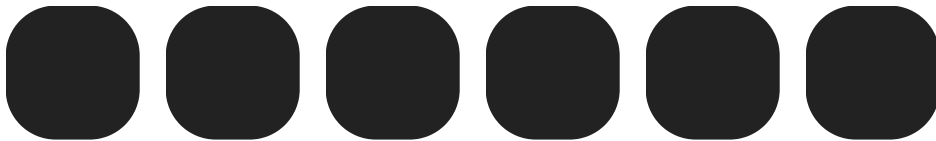
As of Sept. 29, 669 people have died in Missouri traffic crashes this year, an 8% increase over this time last year. Of those deaths, 439 were vehicle occupants who had a seat belt available, but 60 percent chose not to wear a safety belt and were killed. Many of these people might be alive today if they had simply buckled up.

For more information on highway safety, visit saveMOLives.com. You can also follow Save MO Lives on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram.

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