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Arrive Safely This Thanksgiving: Buckle Up!

Glendale Heights-As millions of motorists hit the road to celebrate Thanksgiving, Illinois law enforcement will be working around the clock to make sure holiday travelers are buckled up and driving safely. Glendale Heights is joining the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois State Police to remind motorists to *Click It or Ticket*.

The goal of this high-visibility effort is to reduce motor vehicle crashes and resulting injuries and fatalities. Correct seat-belt use is the most effective way to protect vehicle occupants. According to IDOT, the statewide seat-belt usage rate is at 93.8 percent.

“Wearing your seat belt is second nature for most,” said Sergeant Kirstein. “We’re looking for the few Illinois motorists who skip this lifesaving step.”

Stepped-up patrols and seat belt enforcement zones will be seen throughout Glendale Heights and the state November 17-27.

Last year, 11 people died on Illinois roads during the long holiday weekend from 6 p.m. the Wednesday before Thanksgiving to 5:59 a.m. the following Monday. Many of those fatalities could have been prevented with the click of a seat belt. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s research indicates that proper seat-belt use reduces the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passengers by 45 percent and the risk of moderate to severe injury by 50 percent.

“*Click It or Ticket* is a message we’ve used for years to warn motorists of law enforcement’s intention to issue citations to those who don’t buckle up,” said Sergeant Kirstein. “During Thanksgiving weekend and throughout the year, motorists on Glendale Heights roads can expect to be ticketed if they are unbelted or driving impaired or distracted.”

Statistics show that nighttime driving comes with an increased risk for injury or death. Evening hours account for a higher percentage of alcohol-related crashes, a higher percentage of fatalities and a lower percentage of occupants wearing seat belts. According to NHTSA, among passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2016 daytime crashes, 41 percent were unrestrained. Nighttime crashes show a significantly higher number of unbelted occupant fatalities at 56 percent.

“Whether you’re traveling across town or across the state this Thanksgiving, wear your seat belt. It’s one of the easiest ways to ensure you arrive safely,” Sergeant Kirstein said.

The *Click It or Ticket* enforcement effort is made possible by federal highway safety funds administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation.