FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PennDOT, Police, Safety Partners, Phillie Phanatic Focus on Seat Belt Safety as part of National 'Click It or Ticket' Initiative

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Pennsylvania State Police, Philadelphia Police Department, New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety, Delaware State Police (DSP), AAA Mid-Atlantic, and Pennsylvania Traffic Injury & Prevention Program (PA TIPP) held a media event at Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia to urge motorists to buckle up as part of the National "Click It or Ticket" seat belt enforcement mobilization running through June 5.

"Buckling up is the most effective thing you can do to protect yourself and your loved ones in a crash," said PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian. "Whether you are a driver or a passenger, help us reduce unbelted fatalities by wearing your seat belt every trip, every time. Working together we can all do our part to reduce fatalities on our roadways."

With support from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Pennsylvania State Police and municipal police departments across the state have worked together sending a zero-tolerance message to unbuckled motorists through enforcement and public awareness activities. On May 24, police departments across state lines worked together through the Border-to-Border initiative to make sure all motorists were buckled up.

"This year, the Delaware State Police has seen a rise in the number of fatal car collisions where occupants were not wearing a seat belt," said DSP Public Information Officer Jason Hatchell. "Seat belts save lives, and everyone, whether seated in the front or rear of the vehicle, must remember to buckle up."

"It's crucial that states stand together to support buckling up because it is the simplest way to avoid death and serious injury in the event of a crash," said New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety Director Eric Heitmann. "By working cooperatively to enforce seat belt laws across state borders during the 'Click It or Ticket' campaign, we are promoting safe habits to help reach our shared goal of zero fatalities on our roadways."

The Phillie Phanatic was also on hand to team up with law enforcement to remind motorists to drive safe and buckle up. Police awarded the Phanatic with his own seat belt to ensure his safety.

In Pennsylvania, drivers and passengers 18 years and older are required to wear a seat belt when behind the wheel or in the front passenger seat. If you are a driver 18 or older and police pull you over for another violation, you'll receive a second ticket if you or your front-seat passengers aren't wearing seat belts.

Pennsylvania's Primary Seat Belt Law requires drivers and passengers under 18 years of age to buckle up anywhere in the vehicle. Additionally, drivers under 18 may not operate a vehicle where the number of passengers exceed the number of available seat belts.

During Click It or Ticket, PSP troopers certified as child passenger safety technicians are offering car seat fittings and inspections at various locations throughout the state. The full list of days and times can be found at psp.pa.gov.

"Over 375 troopers are certified child passenger safety seat technicians that undergo thorough training to help ensure that car seats are in good working condition, installed properly and free from recalls," said PSP Public Information Officer Cpl. Brent Miller. "We encourage everyone to take advantage of this free resource to help keep their youngest passengers safe while traveling."

Care givers who are unable to attend one of the events can always contact their nearest Pennsylvania State Police station to set up an appointment.

Under Pennsylvania's Primary Child Passenger Safety Law, children under the age of 4 must be properly restrained in an approved child safety seat anywhere in the vehicle. Additionally, children under the age of 2 must be secured in a rear-facing car seat until they meet the maximum weight or height requirements set by the manufacturer of the seat. Children must ride in an appropriate booster seat until their eighth birthday.

"Car crashes remain a leading killer of children," said PA TIPP Assistant Director Teresa Rychlak. "To prevent injury or death, it is imperative that all caregivers place children in the back seat of the vehicle in the appropriate child restraint for their weight and height. Certified Child Passenger Safety technicians are available to educate caregivers about proper selection of a car seat or booster seat, installation, and proper harnessing to fully protect children in a crash."

To locate a technician or car seat check event near you, call 1-800-CAR-BELT or visit www.pakidstravelsafe.org.

According to national data, wearing your seat belt can increase your chances of surviving a crash by up to 60%.

"With the busy summer travel season now here, I encourage everyone to wear their seat belt whether driving or riding as a passenger in an automobile," said Philadelphia Highway Patrol Lt. Lawrence Tankelewicz. "Buckling your seat belt should be the first thing you do before starting your vehicle. Remember, one small click of the buckle can save your life in a crash."

In 2021 there were 12,672 crashes in Pennsylvania where at least one occupant was not wearing a seat belt, resulting in 378 fatalities.

For more information on seat belt safety visit, www.PennDOT.pa.gov/Safety.

PennDOT's media center offers social-media-sized graphics highlighting topics such as aggressive driving, speeding, distracted driving, and seat belts for organizations, community groups, or others who share safety information with their stakeholders.

The public can join the discussion on social media using the hashtags #BeSafePA, #BuckleUp, and #ClickItOrTicket.

Follow PennDOT on Twitter and like the department on Facebook and Instagram.

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