

## Half of All Passenger Vehicle Occupants Who Died in a Crash Were Not Buckled Up

NHTSA kicks off 2023 Click It or Ticket campaign to reduce traffic fatalities

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The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is kicking off its annual [Click It or Ticket campaign](#) to encourage drivers and passengers to buckle up, reminding everyone that seat belts save lives.

Together with Colonel Roland Butler Jr., Superintendent of the Maryland Department of State Police, David Mills of the Kailee Mills Foundation, and Dr. Alfred Croteau, an acute care surgeon at Hartford Hospital in Connecticut, NHTSA Chief Counsel Ann Carlson previewed [the new national TV ad](#) for the campaign, which runs through Sunday, June 4.

In addition to the new national ad, the campaign will use a mix of digital, paid social media, radio, and out-of-home media to reach the target audience.

State and local law enforcement agencies nationwide will work together during a heightened enforcement period from May 22 through June 4 to protect drivers and passengers from the risks associated with riding in a vehicle unbelted.

“Putting on your seat belt only takes two seconds, but it can save your life,” Chief Counsel Carlson said. “Your seat belt is your best protection against serious or fatal injuries in a crash – and wearing your seat belt is also the law in most states. Whether you’re in the front seat or the back, use your seat belt on every trip, every time.”

NHTSA also released an [Occupant Protection Traffic Safety report](#) that shows pickup truck drivers and passengers have had the highest percentage of unrestrained fatalities across all vehicle types for nearly 20 years. In 2021, 60% of pickup truck drivers and 64% of pickup truck passengers killed in crashes were not wearing seat belts. This group continues to be at the forefront of programs to increase seat belt use.

Unbelted passenger vehicle occupants don’t fare much better. The number of passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes from 2018 to 2021 has increased every year. In 2018, there were 9,545 unrestrained fatalities. In 2021, 11,813 passenger vehicle occupants who died in a crash (45%) were not wearing a seat belt.

Data shows that over the years, a greater percentage of unrestrained fatalities occur at night than during the day. In 2021, 57% of people who died in nighttime crashes were unrestrained, compared to 43% who died during the day.

In January 2022, the U.S. Department of Transportation released the comprehensive [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#), a roadmap to address the national crisis in traffic fatalities and serious injuries. It adopts the safe system approach and builds multiple layers of protection with safer roads, safer people, safer vehicles, safer speeds and better post-crash care.

The NRSS is complemented by unprecedented safety funding included in President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and in February, the Department announced more than \$800 million in grants to help communities carry out projects that can address high-crash areas. DOT also launched the next phase of the NRSS, its [Call to Action campaign](#), and released a one-year progress report and accompanying data visualizations that highlight the extent and magnitude of the U.S. roadway safety problem.

The Department's other roadway safety actions include:

- Produced the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment to guide states on required 2023 assessments.
- Issued the Complete Streets Report to Congress: Moving to a Complete Streets Design Model.
- Issued a final rule on rear impact guards.
- Advanced the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices rulemaking effort, analyzing and resolving the more than 25,000 public comments.
- Published an Advance Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rulemaking concerning speed limiters with a motor carrier-based approach.
- Released proposals for upgrades and a "road map" for the New Car Assessment Program – including developing a proposal to add a pedestrian protection program to NCAP.
- Made significant progress to advance pedestrian automatic emergency braking rulemaking.
- Issued a Standing General Order to collect more data about crashes that occur when automated driving systems and advanced driver assistance systems are engaged.

For more information on seat belt safety, please visit [NHTSA.gov/SeatBelts](https://www.nhtsa.gov/SeatBelts).

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