



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Release: IMMEDIATE

Date: May 8, 2006

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**NORTH CAROLINA LAUNCHES "BUCKLE UP IN YOUR TRUCK"
ENFORCEMENT BLITZ**

*Seventy-One Percent of People Killed in Pickup Truck Crashes in Southeast
Were Not Wearing Their Safety Belts*

RALEIGH — According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, pickup truck drivers and their passengers are among the least likely motorists in North Carolina and across the nation to regularly wear their safety belts.

In fact, 71 percent of the 1,782 people killed in pickup truck crashes in the Southeast during 2004 were not wearing their safety belts at the time of the crash. In North Carolina 62 percent of the 206 people killed in pickup truck crashes during 2004 were not wearing their safety belts.

That is why the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program is joining forces with NHTSA, and state and local law enforcement leaders across an eight-state region in the Southeastern U.S. to launch a high visibility enforcement initiative called "Buckle Up in Your Truck" May 8-21. The goal is to save more lives by convincing more pickup drivers and their passengers to always buckle up.

"No more warnings and no more excuses, we're sending the 'Buckle Up In Your Truck' message out loud and clear," said Darrell Jernigan, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program. "Too many pickup truck drivers and their passengers are getting hurt or killed, so we want to make sure they are buckled up – every trip, every time."

Drivers and passengers in pickup trucks across the nation have lower safety belt usage rates than the occupants of all other vehicles. In 2005, the national observed safety belt use rate in pickup trucks was only 73 percent compared to 83 percent in passenger cars. In North Carolina the use rate in pickup trucks was 78 percent in 2005 compared to the 89 percent in passenger cars.

The multi-state "Buckle Up in Your Truck" initiative immediately precedes the intensive "Click It or Ticket" national safety belt enforcement mobilization May 22-June 4.

For more information about the value of always wearing your safety belt, please visit www.buckleupamerica.org or www.pickupsafetybelt.org. For more information about the Governor's Highway Safety Program contact Beth Horner at 919-733-3083 or visit <http://www.ncdot.org/secretary/GHSP/>.

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