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Life Saving *Click It or Ticket* Mobilization Begins

SANTA ANA, Calif. (May 16, 2014) – The Orange County Sheriff's Department wants to remind motorists to *Click It or Ticket*. In order to enforce this reminder, beginning Monday, May 19, 2014, deputies will be joining the 2014 National Seat Belt Enforcement Mobilization in cracking down on motorists who are not seat belted in.

Even with a seatbelt usage rate of 97.4 percent, California still has 800,000 or more motorists who fail to buckle up. In a crash, they stand a 50 percent greater chance of being killed than those who have taken the two seconds to buckle up. In an on-going effort to reach those remaining safety hold-outs, police and sheriff departments across the state, as well as the California Highway Patrol (CHP), will be taking part in *Click It or Ticket* from May 19th through June 1st.

"Memorial Day weekend kicks off summer vacation season, and we want to ensure that everyone arrives at their destination safe and sound," said Deputy Shane Stewart of the Orange County Sheriff's Department Traffic Bureau. "If you are not wearing your seat belt, you will be ticketed."

According to new data released from the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), fatalities are up nationwide for the first time in five years. In 2012, 10,335 people who were killed in motor vehicle crashes were not wearing their seat belts. NHTSA data also details how more traffic vehicle deaths occur at night. In 2012, 61 percent of passenger vehicle occupants killed during the nighttime hours of 6:00 p.m. – 5:59 a.m. were not wearing their seat belts.

"Wearing a seat belt is one of the easiest and best things you can do to protect yourself in the event of a car crash," said Rhonda Craft, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. "Taking a few moments to properly secure yourself and all your passengers before going on your way could mean the difference between life and death."

The cost for a seat belt violation in California for unbuckled vehicle occupants over age 16 is a minimum of \$161 for a first offense. The penalty fees for failing to properly buckle up any child under the age of 16 is a minimum \$490 per child for a first offense, plus a violation point will be added to the driver's record. If the parent is not in the car, the driver gets the ticket.

For more traffic safety information, visit the California Office of Traffic Safety at www.ots.ca.gov or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration *Click It or Ticket* mobilization, www.nhtsa.gov/ciot.

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