

## PRESS RELEASE

### Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration

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### **Pickup Truck Rollover Demonstrates the Need for Seat Belts**

*Crash dynamics highlight violent collision; highlights need to wear a seat belt.*



**Linthicum, MD** – In a stunning visual demonstration of the violence of an automobile collision, the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration's Highway Safety Office (MHSO) partnered with the Anne Arundel County Police Department and the Maryland Transportation Authority Police in a simulated rollover crash involving a pickup truck. The pickup reached a speed of more than 40 miles per hour before hitting a special apparatus that induces a rollover, and the effects of the crash on an occupant not wearing a seat belt were demonstrated to the audience.

"There's a misconception that a larger vehicle like a pickup truck will keep you safe in a crash," said MVA Administrator and Governor O'Malley's Representative for Highway Safety, Milt Chaffee. "The fact is that drivers and passengers in all seats in every vehicle need to wear a seat belt."

In a 2013 observational survey, seat belt use among pickup truck drivers and passengers in Maryland was estimated to be just slightly above 84 percent, which strongly contrasts with the seat belt use rate of 91.8 percent observed for passenger vehicles. Larger vehicles such as pickup trucks and SUVs are more prone to rolling over in a crash, posing an even greater danger to those that are not buckling up.

"Buckling your seat belt is a split-second decision, but one that can ultimately save a person's life," said Anne Arundel County Police Chief Kevin Davis. "During my years in law enforcement, I've heard every excuse in the book from citizens and police officers about not wearing their seat belts. No excuse is good enough."

National research shows that 65 percent of the 21,667 passenger vehicle occupants killed were men and that men are less likely to wear their seat belts than women. Traffic crashes do not discriminate with regard to location either. In 2012, 13,268 traffic fatalities occurred in rural locations, compared to 8,341 traffic fatalities that occurred in urban locations. More than 60 percent of passenger vehicle occupants killed at night (6 p.m. – 5:59 a.m.) were not wearing their seat belts.

“Seat belt use is one of the easiest, most effective ways to keep people safe on our roadways,” stated Maryland Transportation Authority Police Chief, Colonel Michael Kundrat. “Our officers know that seat belt use saves lives and it is a major pillar in Maryland’s Strategic highway Safety Plan to reduce traffic-related fatalities and injuries. We need everyone to buckle up in all seats, day and night.”

Later this evening, law enforcement agencies across Maryland will be participating in a special “border-to-border” nighttime seat belt enforcement event in conjunction with law enforcement agencies up and down the east coast. This event coincides with Maryland’s participation in the national Click it or Ticket seat belt mobilization. State, county and local police agencies are all participating in the effort and the campaign is receiving extensive coverage through local media. Maryland’s seat belt law requires the use of seat belts in all seating positions and carries a fine of \$83.

“The bottom line is simple,” stated Chaffee. “If you don’t wear your seat belt you can expect a ticket. Even more important if you fail to buckle up you can expect that at some point you will be injured or worse in a crash. We’re reminding everyone to ‘Buckle up or pay the price’.”

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**NOTE:** *Click it or Ticket* is a major component of Maryland's *Toward Zero Deaths* campaign, which focuses on promoting seat belt use while also preventing impaired driving, aggressive driving, and distracted driving. For more information on the *Toward Zero Deaths* campaign, please visit [towardzerodeathsmd.com](http://towardzerodeathsmd.com).