

# Press Release



## **Apache Junction Police Department Before You Hit the Road This Thanksgiving: *Buckle Up, America – Every Trip, Every Time.***

**Apache Junction, Arizona, November 5, 2014** – Apache Junction Police Department is joining in a national effort to reach out to all Thanksgiving travelers with one important message: buckle up. Historically, Thanksgiving is the busiest travel time of the year, putting more people on the road, and unfortunately increasing the likelihood of crashes. Each year in our country, tens of thousands of passenger vehicle occupants die in motor vehicle crashes. In 2012, more than 300 people were killed in crashes on Thanksgiving weekend alone. It's a sad statistic, but even sadder is that many of those deaths could have been prevented with one simple click of a seat belt.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that proper seat belt use reduces the risk of fatal injury to front seat passengers by 45 percent, and the risk of moderate to serious injury by 50 percent. In 2012, approximately 12,174 people survived crashes because they were buckled up. If everyone had worn their seat belts that year, an additional 3,031 lives could have been saved. And that's just the point of this national seat belt campaign: *Buckle Up America – Every Trip, Every Time.*

"More than half the drivers and passengers being killed in crashes aren't wearing seat belts. That's a major problem," said Police Chief Thomas E. Kelly. In 2012, a total of 21,667 passenger vehicle occupants were killed in crashes, so that means that more than 10,000 of those occupants were not buckled up. Thanksgiving weekend in 2012 (6 p.m. Wednesday, November 21, to 5:59 a.m. Monday, November 26), a disturbing 60 percent—that is, 6 out of 10—of the passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes were not wearing seat belts. At night, the statistic was even worse: 69 percent of the occupants killed at night were unbuckled.

Younger drivers are the most likely to be unbuckled in a fatal crash. In 2012, among passenger vehicle occupant fatalities where restraint use was known, the age group 21 to 24 had the highest percentage of occupants killed who were unrestrained: 2,254 fatalities where restraint use was known, of which 63 percent were not wearing seat belts. The second highest percentage of seat belt nonuse among passenger vehicle occupants killed was the 25- to 34-year-olds, at 61-percent unrestrained.

NHTSA data also reveals that males are more likely to be unbuckled than females in a fatal crash. Fifty-six percent of the males killed in crashes in 2012 were not buckled up, as compared to 43 percent for females. Right now, the overall seat belt use rate in the United States is 87 percent, which is a major increase over the 79-percent use rate in 2003, but there a lot of room for further gains.

“For those people who already buckle up every time: Thank you,” said Chief Kelly “For them, this campaign serves as a reminder. But for those people who still don’t buckle up for whatever reason, I want to say this: buckling your seat belt is one of the simplest, safest things you’ll ever do.”

So this Thanksgiving, and every day of the year, make sure your seat belt is buckled before you start any road trip—whether it’s one mile or a thousand.

For more information about traveling safely during Thanksgiving, please visit [www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov](http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov).



###

Contact:  
Serene Carney  
Community Resource Coordinator  
Apache Junction Police Department  
1001 N. Idaho Road  
Mailing: 300 E. Superstition Blvd.  
Apache Junction, AZ 85119  
(480) 474-5442