
TxDOT's five goals: reduce congestion, enhance safety, expand economic opportunity, improve air quality and increase the value of transportation assets.

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TxDOT Celebrates 10-Year Anniversary of the *Click It or Ticket* Campaign Researchers Estimate Safety Belts Have Saved 2,843 Lives in Texas in the Last Decade

AUSTIN - The Texas Department of Transportation's 10th annual *Click It or Ticket* spring campaign kicks off this week with good news—Texans are buckling up more than ever, and thousands have been “saved by the belt.”

Before the *Click It or Ticket* campaign began in Texas in 2002, only 76.1 percent of the state's population was buckling up. Thanks to a decade of increased enforcement and an extensive public education campaign about the life-saving benefits of seat belts, Texans are using seat belts in record numbers. According to the Texas Transportation Institute, 93.84 percent of drivers and passengers now buckle up. Experts at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimate that this increase over the past 10 years has resulted in 2,843 fewer traffic fatalities, 48,000 fewer serious injuries, and a savings to the state of more than \$10 billion in associated costs.

“We're extremely proud of what Texas has been able to accomplish over the past 10 years, and we're grateful to law enforcement, safety advocates, and drivers and passengers everywhere for making it happen,” said Carol Rawson, TxDOT's Traffic Operations Division Director. “But we can't quit now—we want this trend to continue.”

Despite an overall downward trend in fatalities between 2003 and 2009, traffic crashes remain the leading cause of death for those between one and 44 years of age in Texas. In 2009 in Texas, more than 3,000 people died in fatal collisions on Texas streets and highways, and just under half were not buckled up. Wearing a seat belt reduces the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent, and in pickups, that number increases to 60 percent, due to the fact that pickup trucks are more likely to roll over in a crash than passenger cars.

To ensure that Texans continue complying with seat belt laws, thousands of state troopers will join police officers and sheriffs' deputies statewide between May 23 and June 5, including the Memorial Day holiday weekend, to ticket drivers and passengers who aren't buckled up.

“*Click It or Ticket* is about saving lives, because we know that when a person buckles up, their chances of surviving a crash are far better. We prefer voluntary compliance with the law, but we will write tickets if necessary,” said Major Ron Joy of the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Fines for failing to fasten your seat belt can add up to \$250, plus court costs. It's not just drivers that must buckle up—state law also requires passengers in the front and back seat to buckle up.

Visit www.texasclickitorticket.com for more information.

The Texas Department of Transportation

The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining nearly 80,000 miles of road and for supporting aviation, rail, and public transportation across the state. TxDOT and its approximately 12,000 employees strive to empower local leaders to solve local transportation problems, and to use new financial tools, including tolling and public-private partnerships, to reduce congestion and pave the way for future economic growth while enhancing safety, improving air quality, and preserving the value of the state's transportation assets. Find out more at www.txdot.gov. Fan us on Facebook www.facebook.com/txdot. Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/txdot.

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