



Don't Pick Up a Ticket

If Texas had a state vehicle, odds are it would be a pickup. With almost 5 million of them registered in our state, pickups are the transportation of choice for one of every four Texans.

For all the advantages they offer, what many people don't realize is that pickups are twice as likely as passenger vehicles to roll over in a crash. And that reality makes it especially important for pickup drivers and passengers to always use seat belts.

The problem, however, is that motorists in pickups are using seat belts at lower rates than others. According to the Texas Transportation Institute, only 80 percent of pickup passengers buckle up. Compare that to the 92 percent of passengers in all other types of vehicles who regularly put on their seat belts.

With a 91 percent use rate when it comes to buckling up, pickup drivers also trail their counterparts in sedans and SUVs. The results are deadly. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that half of pickup drivers who died in traffic crashes in 2010 were not wearing a seat belt.

The truth is, not buckling up doesn't make sense – financial or otherwise. A seat belt ticket can cost anywhere from \$25 to \$250 plus court costs. Aside from saving money, wearing a seat belt reduces the risk of fatal injury for pickup occupants by up to 60 percent.

State law says everyone in a vehicle must be secured by a seat belt, and children under 8 years old have to ride in a safety seat or booster seat unless they're taller than 4 feet 9 inches. Between May 21 and June 3, including Memorial Day weekend, law enforcement around the state will be working overtime during the annual *Click It or Ticket* crackdown to issue tickets to unbuckled drivers and passengers, along with drivers whose children aren't properly secured.

The smart and safe choice for all motorists is to buckle up, every time, everywhere, and to make sure everyone in the vehicle does the same. Click It or ticket. It's the law.

– Carol Rawson, Director, TxDOT Traffic Operations Division

###