
TxDOT's four goals: Maintain a safe system, address congestion, connect Texas communities, and be a Best-in-Class state agency

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**AS TEENS ARE INVOLVED IN MORE FATAL CRASHES THAN ALL OTHER DRIVERS,
TXDOT VISITS CAMPUSES TO TALK ABOUT LIFE-SAVING SEAT BELTS**

"Teen Click It or Ticket" campaign raises awareness on the importance of teens wearing seat belts

AUSTIN — It's time for Valentines. Love is in the air this time of year, and traffic safety experts are out reminding teens to love their lives and buckle up. As part of its annual effort to encourage new teen drivers to buckle up, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is partnering with high schools across the state in its *Teen Click It or Ticket* campaign to talk to teens about how buckling up can save their lives.

Every year, new teen drivers get behind the wheel in Texas, and unfortunately, teens are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The Teen Click It or Ticket campaign aims to increase seat belt usage among teenagers, ages 15–20.

"Buckling up is so easy, yet we continue to see alarming numbers of injuries and deaths in motor vehicle crashes where the driver and/or passengers were unrestrained," said John Barton, TxDOT deputy executive director. "Whether you're in the front or back seat of the vehicle, our message is simple: seat belts save lives. And if you don't click it, you will get a ticket."

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of teen death in the United States (NHTSA). In Texas in 2011, nearly half (46 percent) of the 295 teen occupants, ages 15–20, killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes were not wearing their safety belts at the time of the crash (TxDOT). Those who survive a vehicle crash may sustain serious injuries if they aren't wearing a seat belt. In 2011, there were 1,074 vehicle traffic crashes in Texas in which unrestrained teen occupants sustained fatal or serious injuries (TxDOT).

Since 2009, the Teen Click It or Ticket campaign has continued to grow in scope. This year, TxDOT is partnering with more than 750 high schools across the state, reaching 800,000 teenagers. Schools are provided educational materials to use on their campuses to encourage teens to buckle up. TxDOT also will make visits to schools and community events across the state with a truck that was mangled in a horrible roll-over crash with two teen boys inside. Fortunately, the boys were wearing their seat belts and walked away from the crash. The truck is a compelling reminder of how seat belts save lives. The truck will travel across the state from February to May, generating awareness about this issue.

Teens can learn more about the “Teen Click It or Ticket” initiative, share stories, take quizzes, win prizes, and hear what local DJs have to say about buckling up by visiting www.seatbeltsrock.com.

For more information, contact TxDOT Media Relations at MediaRelations@txdot.gov or (512) 463-8700.

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Texas Department of Transportation

The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining 80,000 miles of road and for supporting aviation, rail, and public transportation across the state. TxDOT and its 11,000 employees are committed to working with others to provide safe and reliable transportation solutions for Texas by maintaining a safe system, addressing congestion, connecting Texas communities, and being a Best in Class state agency. Find out more at www.txdot.gov. Fan us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/txdot; and follow us on Twitter, www.twitter.com/txdot.