

For Immediate Release
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Before You Hit the Road This Thanksgiving: *Buckle Up—Every Trip. Every Time.*

Jacksonville, Florida; Nov. 22, 2016-- The Northeast Florida Safety Council is joining in a national effort to send Thanksgiving travelers an important lifesaving reminder to *Buckle Up—Every Trip. Every Time.*

Thanksgiving is one of the busiest travel times of the year, and more people on the road increases the likelihood of a crash. During the 2014 Thanksgiving weekend alone, 341 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes nationwide, and 50 percent were not their wearing seat belts at the time of the fatal crash. And for those Thanksgiving weekend crashes that occurred at night, the percentage of unbuckled occupants killed jumped to an unsettling 58 percent.

These deaths represent needless tragedies for families all across America. But even more tragic is that many of these fatalities could have been prevented with the simple click of a seat belt.

“Half of all drivers and passengers killed in crashes on Thanksgiving weekend in 2014 weren’t wearing seat belts at the time of their fatal crash,” said Sue Holley, executive director for the Northeast Florida Safety Council. “This statistic is staggering when we know seat belt use is one of the simplest ways to stay safe when you’re in a vehicle.”

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 2014, approximately 12,802 people survived crashes because they were buckled up. If everyone had worn their seat belts that year, an additional 2,814 lives could have been saved.

The national *Buckle Up—Every Trip. Every Time.* seat belt awareness campaign helps remind Thanksgiving travelers and all drivers about the importance of buckling up—every trip, every time.

NHTSA’s research reveals that males are more likely to be unbuckled than females in a fatal crash, and that younger drivers are also at greater risk of being unbuckled in a fatal crash.

In 2014, 53 percent of the males killed in crashes were not buckled up at the time of the crash, compared to 40 percent of females. And 13- to 15-year-olds and 25- to 34-year-olds had the highest percentages (59%) of occupants killed who were not wearing their seat belts at the time of the fatal crash.

“Buckling your seat belt should be your first step every time you enter a vehicle,” said Holley. “Whether you’re riding or driving, traveling just across town or across the country, please make sure you and your loved ones always wear seat belts – this Thanksgiving and every day of the year. Just remember, *Buckle Up–Every Trip. Every Time.*”

For more information about traveling safely during Thanksgiving, please visit nefsc.org or trafficsafetymarketing.gov.

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