



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

“To Protect and Serve”

Office of the Commissioner

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Click It or Ticket Campaign Reminds Drivers: Buckle Up May 22 - June 4, and Every Day

U.S. Virgin Islands - The Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD) and the VI Office of Highway Safety (VIOHS) is urging drivers to buckle up during the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) national Click It or Ticket high-visibility enforcement effort. The national seat belt campaign, which coincides with the Memorial Day holiday, runs from May 22 to June 4, 2023.

“We want seat belt use to be an automatic habit for drivers and passengers alike,” said VIPD Commissioner, Ray A. Martinez. “It’s not just a safe thing to do — it’s the law. Buckling up is the simplest thing you can do to limit injury or save your life during a crash. We see the results of not wearing a seat belt all the time. We see the often preventable loss of life.”

According to NHTSA, in 2021, there were 11,813 unbuckled passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes in the United States. In that same year, 57% of passenger vehicle occupants killed at night (6 p.m.–5:59 a.m.) were not wearing their seat belts. That’s why one focus of the Click It or Ticket campaign is nighttime enforcement. Participating law enforcement agencies will be taking a no-excuses approach to seat belt law enforcement, writing citations day and night.

“No matter the type of vehicle you’re driving in or the type of road you’re driving on, to stay safe in a vehicle crash, wear your seat belt,” said VIOHS Director Daphne O’Neal. “Unfortunately, many families are suffering because their loved ones refused to follow this simple step. In fact, in FY 2022, we lost 6 community members because they did not buckle their seat belts.”

NHTSA data shows that seat belt use is higher among females than males. In fact, nearly twice as many males were killed in crashes as compared to females in 2021. Of the males killed in crashes during that same year, more than half (54%) were unrestrained. For females killed in crashes, 42% were not buckled up.

“If the enforcement effort alerts people to the dangers of unrestrained driving, we’ll consider our mission to be a success,” said Commissioner Martinez. “If you know a friend or a family member who does not buckle up when they drive, please ask them to change their habits.

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Help us spread this lifesaving message before one more friend or family member is killed as a result of not buckling up. Seat belts save lives, and everyone — front seat and back, child and adult — needs to remember to buckle up.”

For more information on the Click It or Ticket mobilization, please visit NHTSA.gov/ciot or contact Director O’Neal at the VI Office of Highway Safety at daphne.oneal@vipd.vi.gov, or Occupant Protection Coordinator, Denise Gomes, at denise.gomes@vipd.vi.gov or 340-473-7383.

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