



# KANSAS

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
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06-120

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## Seat belt safety takes a front seat in Kansas

*'Click it. Or ticket.'* campaign to begin

Kansas drivers, particularly drivers of pickup trucks, are less likely to use seat belts than motorists in other states, a fact that is resulting in unnecessary deaths and injuries on the road.

“People are dying and others are suffering life-altering injuries on Kansas roads because they don’t take the simple precaution of buckling up,” said Pete Bodyk, chief of the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) Bureau of Traffic Safety. “The Kansas Department of Transportation and law enforcement agencies in Kansas hope education and awareness, in conjunction with enforcement efforts, can persuade Kansans to use their seat belts.”

**Governor Kathleen Sebelius** and **Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller** will be joined by Tonganoxie native **Danni Boatwright**, winner of the “Survivor: Guatemala” television program, to announce the Click it. Or ticket. enforcement/awareness campaign during an event at 10:30 a.m. May 15 at the Kansas Historical Society in Topeka.

**Colonel William Seck**, superintendent of the Kansas Highway Patrol, will also be in attendance showing off new seat belt Convincers purchased via a KDOT grant. Convincers are devices used to demonstrate the importance of seat belt use.

KDOT and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have teamed up to broadcast radio and TV advertisements. In addition, 130 local law enforcement agencies will be participating in the enforcement effort.

Last year, 69 percent of Kansas drivers and passengers were wearing seat belts during observational surveys in the summer. The national seat belt use rate is 82 percent. Of the 429 individuals killed in traffic crashes in the state last year, 70 percent were unrestrained. An even higher percentage of pickup truck drivers and passengers who were killed in traffic crashes were unrestrained.

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In fact, the 2005 survey revealed that only 52 percent of pickup truck drivers were using seat belts. In some primarily rural Kansas counties, the usage rate among pickup truck drivers was less than 50 percent. Nationally, the safety belt use rate in pickup trucks is 73 percent, compared to 83 percent in passenger cars and 85 percent in vans and SUVs.

The fatality rate in traffic crashes involving pickup trucks in rural areas is almost double the fatality rate in urban areas. Part of the danger to rural drivers comes from delayed recovery and emergency response along isolated roadways, but much of the danger is due to excessive speed, increased alcohol use, vehicle rollovers and higher occupant ejection rates due to low safety belt use in these areas.

While rollovers can occur in any kind of passenger vehicle, pickup trucks are twice as likely to rollover as cars because they have a higher center of gravity. Using a seat belt increases the odds of survival in light trucks by as much as 80 percent in the event of a rollover crash.

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