

# Kansas Department of Transportation

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Kansas Warns Pickup Drivers to “Buckle Up in Your Truck” This Thanksgiving** *80 percent of All Pickup Truck Drivers and Their Passengers Killed in Fatal Crashes Last Year Were Not Buckled Up*

**Topeka, Kan.** — Pickup truck drivers and passengers have some of the lowest seat-belt usage rates in Kansas and the nation. And their failure to buckle up is killing them.

In 2005, 6,038 pickup truck occupants were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes nationwide, with 94 of those deaths occurring in Kansas. Nationally, 69 percent of those who died were not wearing their seat belts at the time of the crash. In Kansas, the number gets even worse with 80 percent un-belted at the time of the crash.

In fact, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), pickup truck drivers and their passengers are among those American motorists least likely to regularly wear seat belts.

That is why the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) is joining forces with NHTSA and other state and local highway safety leaders for a strong “Buckle Up in Your Truck” enforcement push across a four-state region this Thanksgiving.

“We’re going to be out in force this heavily traveled Thanksgiving weekend with a strong ‘Buckle Up In Your Truck’ enforcement blitz to help save more lives on our roadways,” said Pete Bodyk, chief of KDOT’s Bureau of Traffic Safety. States involved in the effort include Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska.

Drivers and passengers in pickup trucks across the nation have much lower seat belt usage rates than the occupants of all other vehicles. In 2005, the observed seat belt use rate in pickup trucks

was only 73 percent nationally with Kansas having 52 percent buckling up. Male truck drivers use their seat belts 56 percent of the time while the women's usage rate is 65 percent. A significantly higher percentage of passengers nationally buckled up in cars, 83 percent, and in vans and SUVs, 85 percent.

While rollovers can occur in any kind of passenger vehicle, pickup trucks have a higher center of gravity, which makes them twice as likely to roll over as cars. Moreover, the ejection rate for light truck occupants in a crash is nearly double the ejection rate for occupants of passenger cars, mostly due to the lack of seat belt use.

The simple step of buckling up is the single best defense against ejection from a vehicle, and will increase survival odds by as much as 80 percent in light truck rollover crashes.

In 2005, 31 percent of the pickup trucks involved in fatal crashes across the four state region involved a rollover.

“Too many pickup drivers still take the attitude, ‘It will never happen to me.’ But deadly crashes can and do happen every day,” said Bodyk. “Unless you want to risk a ticket—or worse, your life—please remember to ‘Buckle Up In Your Truck’ this Thanksgiving weekend.”

For more information about the value of always wearing your seat belt, please visit [www.BuckleUpAmerica.org](http://www.BuckleUpAmerica.org) or [www.centralregionproject.org](http://www.centralregionproject.org).

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