

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Thanksgiving safety begins with a click** ***Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time.***

TOPEKA – Forgot something at the store for the big meal? Buckle up. Hitting the road for grandma’s house? Buckle up. This Thanksgiving, the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) is reminding drivers and passengers to “Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time.”

The stakes are high for Kansas drivers and their passengers this holiday season. In 2019 in Kansas, 43.5% of those killed in crashes in Kansas weren’t wearing a seat belt. KDOT Secretary Julie Lorenz reminds Kansans that those are sobering statistics.

“It doesn’t matter whether you are driving down the street or across the country, you endanger yourself if you don’t use a seat belt and you are letting others be in danger if you don’t require them to use their seat belts, too,” said Secretary Lorenz. “Drivers and passengers should use that seat belt every single time they get into a vehicle.”

Between 2015 and 2019, 705 unrestrained Kansans lost their lives in a crash. Nighttime is particularly dangerous, according to statistics, accounting for most unrestrained crash injuries and fatalities.

KDOT is partnering with the U.S. DOT’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to increase awareness of this holiday hazard. Law enforcement will be out in force during the Thanksgiving weekend (6 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 24, to 5:59 a.m. Monday, Nov. 29). If stopped by law enforcement, tickets and fines apply to the driver of a vehicle, regardless of who is not strapped in.

The good news, however, is that statistics prove seat belts save lives. NHTSA estimates that almost 15,000 lives were saved during 2017 alone.

“Don’t allow the risk of injury or fatality from not buckling up to be part of your Thanksgiving plans,” said KDOT Behavioral Safety Manager Gary Herman. “A simple click any time you head out will help you make it to the table and to your family safely.”

The “Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time.” campaign is supported with federal safety funds administered by KDOT. Please drive and ride responsibly. For more information about traveling safely this Thanksgiving, please visit [www.KTSRO.org](http://www.KTSRO.org).

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