



PARSONS POLICE DEPARTMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

Chief Robert Spinks warns: Strict seatbelt enforcement to save lives

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Beginning October 28 through November 1, Parsons Police Department will join other Kansas law enforcement agencies to stop what has been likened to an epidemic in Kansas. In 2016, 44 children ages 0-19 lost their lives due to car crashes in Kansas. Sadly, almost half of those children were not wearing their seat belts.

“In the health field, they talk about making sure children have received their immunizations to prevent deadly diseases,” said Chief Spinks. “But what many parents don’t think about is that wearing a seatbelt properly is the best prevention of serious injury or death in a vehicle.”

According to the 2017 Kansas observational seatbelt survey, children are much more likely to be buckled up if the driver is wearing their seatbelt. If the driver is buckled, about 98% of the children are restrained. If the driver is not buckled, only about 29% of the observed children were buckled. We want adults to model good driving behaviors for children.

Starting on October 28 through November 1, law enforcement across Kansas will be extra-vigilant when patrolling around schools. For more than 20 years, officers have educated and warned drivers and passengers regarding the importance of using seatbelts while in their vehicle.

There should be no surprises when it comes to this enforcement effort. Officers will issue citations to anyone who does not obey Kansas law.

Chief Spinks says, "Even one child's death is unacceptable. Please slow down, especially in school zones, eliminate the distractions, and always buckle up."

Occasionally I hear an errant complaint that the police shouldn't worry about traffic or seatbelt violation," Says Spinks. "Yet, we know more than 70% of crimes in the U.S. involve a vehicle. Felons drive vehicles to and from shooting, drug dealers transport illegal drugs by vehicle, and suspended drivers and wanted persons use vehicles daily. So, doing smart traffic enforcement equates to getting felons and dope dealers off our streets and into jail."

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that proper seat belt use reduces the risk of fatal injury to front seat passengers by 45%. NHTSA's research also reveals that males are more likely to be unbuckled than females in a fatal crash, and younger drivers are also at greater risk of being unbuckled. In fact, 51% of the males killed in crashes were not buckled up at the time of the crash. The 21-24-year-old and 25-34-year-old age groups had the highest percentages (57% and 59%, respectively) of occupants killed who were not wearing their seat belts at the time of the fatal crash.

For the latest data and to see more about Kansas safety belt laws, go to: www.ktsro.org

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