



# **HAWTHORNE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Issued November 15, 2010

*Suitable For Public Dissemination*

### **Too Much Turkey Is No Excuse for Not Buckling Up**

#### ***Special Click It or Ticket Enforcement Mobilization Aimed at Increasing Seat Belt Use and Saving Lives***

Hawthorne, CA – With the holidays upon us and millions of Americans hitting the roads, the Hawthorne Police Department wants everyone to arrive safely at their destinations. Drivers and passengers need to know that officers will be out in force sending the strong message to “Click It or Ticket.”

“Our department is taking the first proactive steps to ensure our citizens and commuters a safe and happy holiday season,” said Chief Fager, Hawthorne Police Department.

While seat belt use is at a record high of 83 percent nationwide, 45 million Americans still fail to buckle up when they get in a motor vehicle. Even though in California 96.2 percent use their restraints, it still means that over 1.5 million Californians don’t buckle up.

During the holiday period, over 35 vehicle occupants who are not buckled up will be killed in motor vehicle crashes each day nationwide. Statewide, overall traffic deaths declined by 23 percent, from 3,995 in 2007, to 3,081 in 2009, due in part to the increased use of seat belts. Total traffic fatalities are at their lowest levels in six decades.

“Sadly, the holidays, which for many are the happiest time of the year, can also be one of the deadliest and most tragic,” said Chief Fager.

“Regular seat belt use is the single most effective way to protect people and reduce fatalities in motor vehicle crashes,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. “Law enforcement estimates indicate that over 1,300 Californians survived by buckling up last year. Sadly however, about 150 others will not be gathering with families during the holidays because they choose not to use their seat belts.”

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National statistics also show that those least likely to buckle up are teens, young adults, males, nighttime riders, motorists traveling on rural roads, and individuals traveling in pickup trucks.

More than 100 local law enforcement agencies statewide and the CHP will be participating in this year's Click It or Ticket mobilization. Funding to support California's Click It or Ticket campaign was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.