



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Annual *Buckle Up* Campaign Reminds Drivers:  
Buckle Up May 20 - June 2, and Every Day**

**Barre, VT** — The Vermont Agency of Transportation joins law enforcement agencies across the state and nation in urging drivers to buckle up ahead of a national high-visibility enforcement effort. The national seat belt enforcement campaign, which coincides with the Memorial Day holiday each year, runs from May 20 to June 2, 2024.

Law enforcement officers from Vermont, New York, and Massachusetts, with support from the Vermont and New York State Highway Safety Offices, will be holding a press conference to raise awareness about the *Buckle Up* seat belt safety campaign. The press conference will take place on Monday, May 20, at 10:30 a.m. at the Vermont Welcome Center in Bennington at 100 VT Route 279 (at the intersection of US Route 7 and VT Route 279). This “Border to Border” event kicks off the national seat belt enforcement campaign. Law enforcement officers from VT, NY, and MA will be in attendance to remind drivers of the importance of wearing seat belts. There will also be a “Battle of the Belts” competition with local high school driver education students from the three states.

This is the 23<sup>rd</sup> year that Vermont, New York, and Massachusetts are participating in the national seat belt enforcement campaign, which began in North Carolina in 1993 (and is also known throughout the country as the *Click It or Ticket* campaign). Vermont, New York, and Massachusetts joined the movement in 2002, and since 2004 all U.S. states and territories have participated each year.

“The ‘Border-to-Border’ component of the *Buckle Up* campaign is so important because it demonstrates our unified commitment to highway safety,” said Paul White, Law Enforcement Liaison with the Vermont State Highway Safety Office. “The importance of using seat belts affects everyone, in all states. With many travelers on the road for the Memorial Day holiday weekend, we urge all drivers and passengers to wear seat belts.”

“Seat belt use should be an automatic habit for all drivers and passengers,” said Lieutenant Camillo Grande of the Bennington Police Department. “During the *Buckle Up* campaign, we’ll be

working with our fellow law enforcement officers across local and state lines to get the message out that buckling up is a simple way to limit injury or save your life during a crash.”

In Vermont, the seat belt use rate in 2023 was 88.9%, which is around the national average. The 11.1% of Vermonters who do not wear a seat belt need to know that seat belts save lives. In 2023, 25 of the 42 motor vehicle fatalities were either unbelted or improperly belted. That means that 59% of 2023 motor vehicle fatalities were not buckled up. During this Buckle Up enforcement campaign, participating law enforcement agencies will be taking a no-excuses approach to seat belt law enforcement, working hard to help keep Vermonters safe.

“Our goal is to alert people to the importance of wearing seat belts and the fact that seat belts save lives,” said Lieutenant Allen Fortin of the Chittenden County Sheriff’s Department. “If you have a friend or loved one who does not buckle up, please ask them to change their habit. Everyone — in the front seat and back, child and adult — needs to remember to buckle up, every trip, every time.”

For more information about the national seat belt enforcement mobilization, please visit [NHTSA.gov/ClickIt](https://www.nhtsa.gov/ClickIt).

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