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Traffic safety partners remind drivers that seat belts save lives

Edmonton... Albertans are reminded about the importance of using seat belts and child safety seats as part of a traffic safety campaign, which will include a seat belt enforcement blitz in late October.

By using a seat belt, motorists increase the chances of survival in a collision by 50 per cent. According to Transport Canada, close to 40 per cent of drivers and passengers killed in collisions were not wearing their seat belt at the time of the crash.

Using a seat belt remains the most effective way to reduce the risk of injury or death in a collision. A seat belt keeps drivers and passengers from striking the interior of the vehicle, colliding with other passengers or being ejected from the vehicle, where the risk of being killed is five times greater.

In Alberta, every person travelling in a vehicle equipped with a seat belt must wear it or use a child safety seat. The fine for seat belt and child safety seat infractions is \$115. Drivers are responsible for ensuring passengers under 16 are properly buckled up or using child safety seats when required. If convicted, the driver is responsible for paying the fine.

Here are some tips to ensure a seat belt is worn properly.

- A typical seat belt consists of a lap and shoulder belt. The shoulder belt should be worn closely against the body, over the shoulder and across the chest, never under the arm or behind the back. The lap belt should be firm against the body and low across the hips.
- A seat belt should not be worn twisted, as the full width of the belt is required to spread motor vehicle collision forces across the body.
- While a child can start using a seat belt alone at age six or when they weigh over 18 kilograms; it is recommended that the child be in a booster seat until they turn nine or reach a weight of 37 kilograms.
- Pregnant women must wear a seat belt. To wear the lap and shoulder belt properly they should sit as upright as possible. The lap belt should be worn low so it pulls downward on the pelvic bones and not directly against the abdomen.
- Air bags do not replace a seat belt—they are designed to work in conjunction with them. They do not prevent drivers and passengers from being thrown from the vehicle.

On October 26-28, law enforcement agencies across the province will be conducting vehicle checks and issuing tickets for seat belt and child safety seat infractions to remind drivers that seat

belts save lives.

The enforcement blitz supports the Alberta Occupant Restraint Program's education campaign, which runs in October and November and focuses on the importance of wearing seatbelts and using child safety seats. For more information on the occupant restraint education and awareness campaign, visit the Alberta Occupant Restraint Program (AORP) website at www.albertaseatbelts.ca

Agencies participating in the enforcement blitz include: Edmonton Police Service, Calgary Police Service, Lethbridge Regional Police Service, Medicine Hat Police Service, Integrated Traffic Units (RCMP and Sheriffs) and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement. For more information on the three-day enforcement blitz, contact your local law enforcement agency.

This initiative is part of Alberta's Traffic Safety Plan that focuses on education, enforcement, communications, engineering, community engagement and legislation to help make our roads safer.

For more information on the plan, go to www.transportation.alberta.ca

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Media inquiries may be directed to:

Liz Owens
Office of Traffic Safety
Alberta Transportation
780-427-6775
liz.owens@gov.ab.ca

Paul Oss
Communications
Alberta Transportation
780-644-5786 or 780-619-5874 (Cell)
paul.oss@gov.ab.ca

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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