



As millions of travelers flood the roads this Thanksgiving, Russell Township is partnering with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to share an important lifesaving reminder: *Buckle Up – Every Trip. Every Time.*

During the 2015 Thanksgiving weekend, 301 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes nationwide, and 53 percent were not their wearing seat belts at the time of the fatal crash. Nighttime proved even more deadly, with 57 percent

of Thanksgiving weekend crashes occurring at night. Much like drunk driving, these deaths represent needless tragedies for families across America. These deaths could have been completely prevented with the simple click of a seat belt.

"Year after year, we are devastated by stories of family members who are killed on their way to Thanksgiving festivities," said Lieutenant Scott McDermott. "Nearly half of all drivers and passengers killed in crashes on Thanksgiving weekend in 2015 were not wearing seat belts at the time of their fatal crash. This statistic is just unacceptable when we know that seat belt use is one of the simplest ways to stay safe while riding in a vehicle."

NHTSA estimates that proper seat belt use reduces the risk of fatal injury to front seat passengers by 45 percent, and the risk of moderate to serious injury by 50 percent. In 2015, approximately 13,941 people survived crashes because they were buckled up. If everyone had worn their seat belts that year, an additional 2,804 lives could have been saved. NHTSA's research also reveals that males are more likely to be unbuckled than females in a fatal crash, and that younger drivers are also at greater risk of being unbuckled. In fact, in 2015, 52 percent of the males killed in crashes were not buckled up at the time of the crash, compared to 42 percent of females. The 13- to 15-year-old and 18- to 34-year-old age groups had the highest percentages (57% and 58% respectively) of occupants killed who were not wearing their seat belts at the time of the fatal crash.

Our goal with the *Buckle Up — Every Trip. Every Time.* Seat belt awareness campaign is to save lives—period," said Lt. McDermott. "Hopefully, this campaign reminds Thanksgiving travelers, and all drivers, about the importance of buckling up—every trip, every time. Thanksgiving should be a happy time, not a tragic one."

Whether you're a passenger or the driver, riding long distances or short, please buckle your seat belt. Doing so ensures everyone arrives safely to their Thanksgiving destinations. Remember: *Buckle Up—Every Trip. Every Time.*