

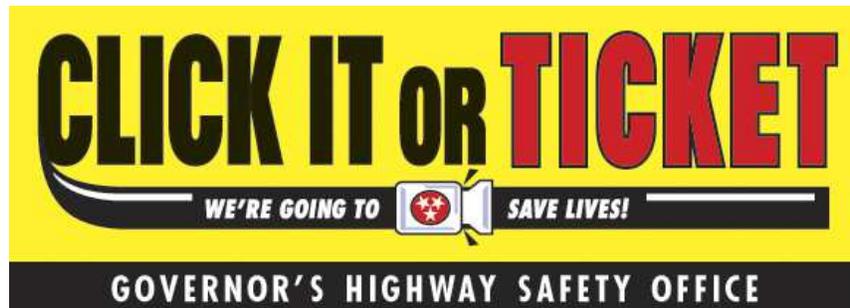


Putnam County Justice Center
421 East Spring Street • Cookeville, TN 38501
Phone: 931.528.8484 • Fax: 931.528.7043

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUTNAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE INCREASES SEAT BELT ENFORCEMENT DURING NATIONAL "CLICK IT OR TICKET" MOBILIZATION

Putnam County, TN – The Putnam County Sheriff's Office is partnering with the Tennessee Governor's Highway Safety Office to step up seat belt enforcement from May 18 to 31, just ahead of one of the busiest travel weekends of the year.

"Every day, unbuckled motorists are losing their lives in motor vehicle crashes," said Sheriff Eddie Farris. "As we approach Memorial Day weekend and the summer vacation season, we want to make sure people are doing the one thing that can save them in a crash—buckling up."

Tennessee reached its highest seat belt usage percentage last year at 87.71%. However, Tennessee is still considered a "low use" state on a national level. According to the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, over half of Tennessee's traffic fatalities in 2014 were not restrained at the time of the crash.

Each year, the University of Tennessee Center for Transportation Research performs an observational seat belt survey. The results of this survey indicate that male pickup truck occupants have the lowest rate of seat belt use statewide. This statistic holds true for both rural and urban areas.

Last month, Governor Haslam signed a bill that will increase Tennessee's seat belt fine beginning in January 2016. "The fine is more than doubling," said Tennessee Highway Patrol Colonel Trott. "The statistics speak for themselves—when we have more people buckling up, we have more people walking away from crashes. Start making the smart decision now before it costs you."

"Our law enforcement partners receive funding each year specifically to take part in this campaign," said Governor's Highway Safety Office Director Kendell Poole. "They will be looking for seat belt violators, and they will ticket you. If you think not wearing your seat belt doesn't impact anyone but you, you are wrong. Every citizen is impacted by medical and emergency expenses, lost productivity, increased insurance premiums, and property loss. This doesn't even

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begin to scratch the surface of the pain and suffering of your friends, family, and the law enforcement and emergency personnel working the crash.”

For more information on seat belt safety, visit www.tntrafficsafety.org.

Media contact:

Beth Nelson, PIO

sheriffpio@putnamcountyttn.gov

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