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## Law enforcement to focus on seat belts in October

North Dakota law enforcement officers will be out in full force from October 4-17 ticketing those who are not wearing a seat belt.

According to the North Dakota Department of Transportation, there are 20 agencies, including the North Dakota Highway Patrol, city police departments, and county sheriff's departments, participating in the statewide effort.

Seat belt use is a key factor in surviving vehicle crashes and rollover crashes. "The vast majority of people who are ejected from a vehicle during a crash don't survive," said NDDOT Director Francis Ziegler. "In most cases, these people would have survived if they had been using their seat belts."

Nearly 75 percent of people killed in crashes in 2008 were not wearing seat belts and even though not all crashes are survivable, the majority of crashes are, provided safety restraints are in use. To date this year 105 fatalities have occurred in North Dakota and 70 percent were confirmed as not wearing a seat belt.

"Seat belts save lives," said Ziegler. "NDDOT, along with the state Highway Patrol, local law enforcement agencies, Safe Communities and other traffic safety partners, will remain committed to working together to encourage seat belt use through education, enforcement and community programs."

It is the law to wear a seat belt in North Dakota. The law states a driver under the age of 18 can be pulled over for not wearing a seat belt. The law also states a driver 18 or older, can be cited for not wearing a seat belt if pulled over for another violation. The fall campaign reinforces the importance of wearing a seat belt to buckle up and save lives.