



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Make it a Safe Summer by Buckling up When Riding on the Road or Water**

*Georgians reminded to click their seat belts and life vests during annual "Make Your Summer Click" tour*

**(ATLANTA)** The Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Governor's Office of Highway Safety want to you to "Make Your Summer Click" by always wearing seat belts and life jackets when on the road or on the water.

This important safety message comes before the Memorial Day Holiday weekend when AAA is predicting more than 36 million people will be traveling on the road for their first trip of the summer.

State troopers and local law enforcement officers will be working throughout the weekend to make sure everyone is buckled, driving sober, driving alert and obeying the speed limit.

"We want everyone to enjoy themselves, but we also want them to get home safely from their trip," Harris Blackwood, Director of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety said. "Wearing your seat belt is the one piece of equipment that can save your life in the event you are ever in a traffic crash, and no matter if you are riding in the front or the back of your vehicle, you need to be buckled."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the odds of a motorist being ejected during a traffic crash double when they are not wearing a seat belt, and the fatality rate is 80 percent for people who are completely ejected from their vehicle.

The Memorial Day Holiday weekend was a deadly one in Georgia last year with 23 people killed and more than 1,300 injured in 3,283 traffic crashes over the four-day holiday period. 12 of the 23 people who died in crashes during last year's holiday travel period in the state were not wearing seat belts.

"Careful planning is paramount to a safe and enjoyable holiday weekend," Colonel Mark McDonough, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Safety said. "Make sure to get plenty of rest before your trip, don't drive after consuming alcoholic beverages, make sure everyone is wearing a seat belt and avoid any distractions that may take your focus from the roadway and surrounding driving conditions."

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources will be checking boats and other watercraft for required safety equipment and to make sure operators are sober not only during the holiday weekend but throughout the boating season.

According to the DNR, 63 people drowned and 15 were killed in 135 boating incidents in Georgia in 2017. Game wardens also made 189 Boating under the Influence arrests.

“We want everyone to enjoy the summer through the many vacation and recreation opportunities available in Georgia,” said Colonel Eddie Henderson, director of Georgia DNR’s Law Enforcement Division. “But you must do it safely. The Game Wardens and Troopers will be out there, enforcing boating and traffic laws and reminding our citizens and visitors that the best way to a fun day is to practice safety. Stay alert and don’t boat or drive impaired or distracted, show common courtesy to others, and wear your life jackets and seat belts.”

The Georgia State Patrol and Governor’s Office of Highway Safety would like to offer these safety tips for those traveling by vehicle:

- **Leave early- The amount of traffic predicted on the roads means it will take longer than usual to reach your destination.**
- **Don’t try to make up time on the road - Exceeding the speed limit will increase your chances of being in a crash**
- **Plan rest stops if your trip is going to take longer than 2-3 hours or if you are feeling tired**
- **Make sure everyone in your vehicle is wearing their seat belts**
- **Put down your phones and limit anything can take your focus off of driving**
- **Never drive when under the influence of alcohol or drugs**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources offer these safety tips for when those who are going to be boating or swimming:

- **Inspect your boat/watercraft and safety equipment before you put it in the water**
- **Make sure children are wearing life vests at all times when on the water**
- **Keep your eyes on children at all times when they are swimming**
- **Marginal swimmers or those who don’t know how to swim should always wear a life vest**
- **Do not operate a boat/watercraft or go swimming when consuming alcohol**
- **Be alert and do not operate a vessel while distracted**
- **Take a boater education class and swim lessons**
- **Know, obey and follow navigation and traffic rules and laws**

For more information, please follow the Georgia Department of Public Safety, Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division and Governor’s Office of Highway Safety on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.