



NEWS

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BUCKLE UP OR BE PREPARED TO PAY UP, CHP OUT IN FORCE

(Sacramento) With the upcoming Memorial Day holiday, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) urges motorists to use caution and consideration during their holiday driving.

“Memorial Day weekend can be a safe celebration for everyone,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “It’s about making sound decisions and planning ahead before you head out on the highway, for example wearing your seat belt and designating a non-drinking driver beforehand.”

The three-day holiday is a Maximum Enforcement Period (MEP) for the CHP. All available officers will be patrolling the roadways during the MEP, which begins at 6 p.m. Friday, May 22 and extends until midnight on Monday, May 25.

The CHP’s maximum enforcement effort is also part of the state’s recently launched 2009 Memorial Day *Next Generation Click It or Ticket* mobilization. The start-of-summer campaign is supported by \$3 million in traffic safety grants awarded by the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The CHP’s primary mission is to prevent loss of life and injury to all motorists. That mission parallels the Strategic Highway Safety plan, a roadmap for improving safety on the state’s roadways that all state traffic safety organizations follow. An element of the plan is to improve the use of passenger restraints.

During the 2008 Memorial Day weekend, 38 people died on California’s roadways; 68 percent of those killed in CHP jurisdiction were not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the crash.

“Many of those deaths could have been easily avoided by taking just one second to buckle a seat belt,” stated Commissioner Farrow. “Unfortunately, too many motorists still need a reminder, which is why our officers will be on the lookout for those who are not buckled up.”

In addition to those who fail to fasten their seatbelt, speeders and motorists driving under the influence may find themselves on the wrong side of the law. Last year CHP officers statewide arrested 1,450 drivers for DUI during the Memorial Day weekend.

The Memorial Day MEP is also an Operation Combined Accident Reduction Effort (CARE) holiday. Operation CARE is a joint program of the nation’s highway patrols that places special safety emphasis on interstate highways during holiday periods. CARE highways in California include Interstates 80, 40, 15 and 5.

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