*Contact:*

*[Date]*

**Primary Seat Belt Law Now Effective**

[City, Utah Note: Include Utah only if naming a city other than Salt Lake City] - Buckle your seat belts, it’s going to be a safe ride. Starting May 12, 2015, wearing a seat belt while driving is a primary law in Utah. This means law enforcement can now stop, educate, and cite individuals for driving or riding unbuckled on Utah roads. The enforcement aspect of this new law is focused on increasing seat belt education to change behavior and save lives.

“Utah’s primary seat belt law empowers families and friends to protect those they love most as well as the strangers driving in the next car,” said [name, title, organization.] “This law will save lives, and I am fully confident of that.”

When violators are stopped by law enforcement, they will receive instruction on the importance of seat belt use along with an information card that includes seat belt safety statistics and a call to action to change their behavior and buckle up. The card can be viewed at ZeroFatalities.com with statistics including:

(1) Seat belts are the single most effective traffic safety device for preventing death and injury (2) Seat belts help the driver stay in the driver seat to maintain control of the vehicle

(3) In a crash, unbuckled passengers can become a projectile and increase the risk of hurting or killing others in the car by 40 percent.

To further encourage seat belt use, violators who receive a citation will be offered an option to take an online seat belt safety course where, upon completion of the course, a seat belt fine of $45 will be waived. The online 30-minute course is available through the Utah Safety Council at utahsafetycouncil.org and provides videos, stories and information on seat belt use.

“Unbuckled fatalities need to be a thing of the past. Nearly everyone knows someone who, despite all logic, continues to risk driving unbuckled,” said [name, title, organization.] “Please recognize the responsibility you have to protect your life and the lives of those you love. Buckle up and persuade everyone you know to do the same.”

In 2014there were 72 unbuckled fatalities, accounting for nearly half of Utah’s total roadway fatalities\* last year. Observational surveys completed by the Highway Safety Office report 83 percent seat belt usage in Utah. This means the remaining 17 percent of our population continue to drive unbuckled and contribute to nearly half of our roadway fatalities\*. Utah’s new primary seat belt law aims to change these statistics.

For more information, visit ZeroFatalities.com, or for inquires about the seat belt safety course contact the Utah Safety Council at 801.746.SAFE (7233) or toll-free 800.933.5943

*\*Excluding pedestrian, bicyclist and motorcycle fatalities.*

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