

Embargoed until 00:01 hours, Tuesday, 5 February 2008

Police crack down on seat belts and speeding

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS after the wearing of seatbelts was made mandatory in the United Kingdom, Scottish Police Chiefs are warning drivers and passengers - remember to "buckle up" every time you get into a vehicle or you could regret it.

The reminder comes as the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) launches its first of four days of awareness in 2008 aimed at tackling speeding and the non-wearing of seatbelts.

In particular, ACPOS wants van drivers and their passengers to ditch their stereotypical image of failing to wear seatbelts, carrying unrestrained passengers in the back, and driving too fast and too close on Scotland's roads.

High visibility patrols will be out on the country's roads today (Tuesday 5 February 2008) targeting people who are speeding or not wearing seatbelts and van drivers and their passengers will be a main focus for officers.

The latest figures from the Scottish Government's "*Road Accidents Scotland 2006*" report show that between 2000 and 2006 there were, on average, 893 crashes involving injuries each year involving light goods vehicles. On average, 173 crashes resulted in death or serious injury for each of those years.

Chief Constable John Vine, Chairman of the ACPOS Road Policing Business Area, said: "On this occasion, we are focusing our attention on van drivers and their passengers because experience tells us that a significant number of them are not wearing seatbelts within vehicles that are often being driven too close to the vehicle in front and at excessive speed.

"They may not be unique in this regard, but we are sufficiently concerned for their safety and for the wellbeing of other road users to undertake this tailored enforcement activity.

"Government statistics show that approximately one in five crashes involving a van resulted in death or serious injury – a number that has not changed significantly for several years. This fact alone should be incentive enough for van drivers and their passengers to make absolutely certain that they are not breaking the law and are taking all relevant safety advice on board. Not doing so puts their and other people's lives in jeopardy. Our message is '*Don't risk it!*'"

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NOTE TO NEWS EDITORS:

For further information, please contact ACPOS Communications at:
0141 435 1241 or (after hours) 07771 842 881

BACKGROUND:

FACTS ABOUT LIGHT GOODS / COMMERCIAL VEHICLE OPERATION – 2002-2006

According to the Scottish Government's "Road Accidents Scotland 2006", light goods vehicles have been involved on average annually from 2002 to 2006:

- 893 reported injury accidents (more than two a day);
- 173 fatal and serious accidents (nearly one every two days);
- 1 killed and 11 serious severe injuries in built-up areas (one a month);
- 116 severities of all other kinds of injuries in built-up areas (almost one every three days);
- 7 killed and 45 seriously injuries in non built-up areas (over one a week);
- 204 severities of all other kinds of injuries in non-built-up areas (almost one a day);
- 34 more people injured in all kinds of severities in non built-up areas in 2006 over 2005 – an increase far greater than any other mode of transportation in Scotland.