

NEWS RELEASE

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SEATBELT DAY OF ACTION

Today (Wednesday 1 September 2010), police forces across Scotland are focussing their attention on vehicle occupants who fail to wear a seat belt or suitable restraint. The 24 hour 'Day of Action' co-ordinated by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) is part of the Scottish Police Service's year-round commitment to reduce the number of casualties on our roads.

Today's day of action follows the launch of the Have You Clicked campaign earlier this year and also coincides with the 21st anniversary of legislation being introduced which meant children travelling in the back of cars had to wear seatbelts.

Seatbelts are critical in preventing serious injury and can reduce the risk of fatal injury by about 50%. Children are particularly at risk in vehicles when they are not properly restrained.

In Scotland, it is estimated that 1 in 3 people who are killed in vehicles are not wearing seatbelts, and half of those people could have been saved had they worn a seatbelt. Modern vehicle safety features, such as airbags, are only designed to work if the occupant is suitably restrained.

Despite the obvious risk, police figures show that on average, 27,000 drivers and passengers are caught every year in Scotland not wearing a seatbelt.

Chief Superintendent Charlie Common from Lothian and Borders Police who is the ACPOS lead on Casualty Reduction said:

'The number of people who are still not wearing a seatbelt is totally unacceptable and highlights that vehicle occupants are continuing to show a complete disregard for their own safety. It is equally of great concern that some drivers are putting the lives of their children at risk by allowing them to travel unrestrained.'

'During previous ACPOS campaigns, incidents have been detected highlighting the situation. For example in April a 37 year old driver was reported for carrying three children, all under 5 years of age, none of whom were properly restrained.'

'Throughout the day officers from all Scottish forces will be targeting vehicle occupants who continue to break the law, utilising marked and unmarked police vehicles. In some areas Force Road Safety Officers will be conducting checks of child seats and offering advice.'

Issued by:

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Notes to editors.

In April this year, the Police and Road Safety Scotland launched the campaign, '**HAVE YOU CLICKED?**' to encourage drivers and passengers to put their seatbelt on every time they get in any vehicle.

More than fifty partners are backing the '**HAVE YOU CLICKED?**' campaign and materials displaying the campaign branding such as stickers and posters will be in and on vehicles, in workplaces, buildings and other public spaces around the country. More information on the campaign can be found on the website – <http://www.donriskit.info/seatbelts>

Detailed below is the current Seat Belt legislation.

	Front seat	Rear seat	Who is responsible?
Driver	Seat belt MUST be worn if available.		Driver
Child up to 3 years	Correct child restraint MUST be used.	Correct child restraint MUST be used If one is not available in a taxi, then the child may travel unrestrained in the rear	Driver
Child from 3rd birthday up to EITHER 1.35m in height, OR 12 years old	Correct child restraint MUST be used	Where seat belts fitted, correct child restraint MUST be used MUST use adult belt if the correct child restraint is not available in three scenarios: - in a in a licensed taxi or private hire vehicle ; - for a short distance for reason of unexpected necessity; - two occupied child restraints prevent fitment of a third. In addition, a child 3 and over may travel unrestrained in the rear seat of a vehicle if seat belts are not available	Driver
Child over 1.35 metres, or 12 to 13 years	Seat belt MUST be worn if available	Seat belt MUST be worn if available	Driver

Adult passengers (ie 14 years and over)	Seat belt MUST be worn if available	Seat belt MUST be worn if available	Passenger
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