

Thursday, 23 August 2007

For Immediate Use

## **Police chiefs to speeding young motorists: 'It's your life and others' at stake – slow down!'**

ONE IN EVERY THREE fatalities on Scotland's roads during the first half of 2007 involves a young person under 25 compared to one in every four last year, according to an analysis carried out by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS).

Road fatality data compiled by all eight Scottish police forces has revealed that despite all the efforts of the Scottish Executive, Road Safety Scotland and the Scottish Police Service, there has only been two fewer road fatalities during the first six months of 2007 when compared to the same period in 2006 but 10 more fatalities involving motorists under 25 years of age – a 28 per cent increase.

In an effort to drive home the message, all eight Scottish police forces are taking part in a three-day '*Rural Road Awareness Weekend*', organised by ACPOS, from Friday, 24 August to Sunday, 26 August. Scotland's motorists are being urged to slow down as many rural roads are not designed for the speeds that some drivers attempt to reach.

The campaign, the second in a series of four special '*Days of Action*' during 2007-08 designed to make Scottish motorists more aware of the dangers of driving too fast on the country's rural roads. They will see high visibility policing patrols on the country's rural roads for three days targeting drivers of all ages and for all offences but particularly the under 25s, who speed or choose not to wear a seatbelt.

Chief Constable John Vine, Chair of the ACPOS Road Policing Business Area, said: "ACPOS and the Scottish Police Service are concerned about the number of young drivers who have lost their lives or been seriously injured this year.

"With regard to speeding, I would urge all motorists to be aware of the associated dangers, especially in the countryside, where a high proportion of serious crashes occur.

"This campaign is about raising awareness of these issues and leaving people in no doubt that the police are out there targeting this sort of behaviour, day in and day out."

Mr. Vine concluded: "Our message is simple - Don't risk it! The consequences are not only points on your licence and a fine but potentially death or serious injury."

Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson said: "I welcome the joint action from Scotland's eight police forces on this. We have all seen the devastating consequences of accidents involving young drivers such as we witnessed in Fife last week. Sadly, too many young drivers are still taking unnecessary risks and putting lives in danger.

"I recently announced that I will be bringing together interested parties from across Scotland to advise on what further measures we can take to tackle road safety.

“Meanwhile, I hope that this campaign and today’s statistics from the police will be a wake up call to those who continue to take risks in the misguided assumption that it won’t happen to them.”

**-end-**

## **NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS:**

During the first six months of this year, 129 people have lost their life in accidents throughout Scotland with 45 of those being under 25 (34.88%). This is slightly lower than during the same period in 2006, when there were 131 fatalities with 35 (26.72%) under 25s.

While the decrease in the total number of fatalities is slight on a national basis, the increase in fatalities involving motorists under 25 is substantial (10 additional fatalities for an increase of 28.57%). On a regional basis, Police Force area results show substantive decreases to substantial increases with decreases in Central Scotland, Fife, Grampian, and Strathclyde and increases in Dumfries and Galloway, Lothian and Borders, Northern and Tayside police force areas.

A complete breakdown of figures is available in an Excel spreadsheet format upon request.

According to the DVLA, the number of licence holders in Scotland as at January 2006 was 3,390,932 (2,826,797 Full and 564,135 Provisional).

The number of 25 year olds and younger at the same period was 431,694 (239,830 Full and 191,864 Provisional), which is 12.7 percent (8.5 and 34 percent, respectively).

Reducing serious and fatal road crashes is one of the aims of the ACPOS Road Policing Strategy. Scottish police forces are fully committed to achieving government targets for casualty reduction by the year 2010 by addressing issues of drink / drug driving, speeding, education, vehicle safety, enforcement strategies and safety cameras.

Police officers are on duty throughout Scotland on a 24/7/365 basis endeavouring to make Scotland’s roads safer. Speeding and failing to wear a seatbelt are both inherently dangerous choices to make. It has been sadly proven that in the event of a collision, they can and do cost lives.

For further information or to arrange an interview with Chief Constable John Vine, please contact Graham MacDonell at ACPOS Communications on 0141 435 1241 or 0141 435 1240 or 07771 842 881 after hours.

Mr. Vine will be available for interviews on Thursday 23 August after 3:00 p.m. (1500 hours) and on Friday 24 August after 1:00 p.m. (1300 hours).

Incidents of note will be distributed on Monday 27 August after the three ‘days of action’.