

**Thursday, June 21, 2007**

**For Immediate Use**

## **Police chiefs warn: “Belt up and slow down!”**

SCOTLAND’S drivers – especially young drivers - and their passengers are being urged today to belt up and slow down.

High visibility policing patrols will be out on the country’s roads on Friday 22 June targeting drivers of all ages and particularly the under 25s, who either speed or choose not to wear a seatbelt.

All eight Scottish Police Forces are taking part in Friday’s ‘Speeding / Seatbelt Awareness Day’, organised by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS).

Tayside Chief Constable John Vine, CBE, Chair of the ACPOS Road Policing Business Area, said:

“Police officers are on duty throughout Scotland on a 24/7 basis endeavouring to make our roads safer.”

According to recently-released road traffic statistics for 2006, 314 people (including 25 children) were killed, 2,594 were seriously injured and over 14,000 were slightly injured on Scotland’s roads.

“Friday is the second such day in 2007 aimed at highlighting seatbelt and speeding issues, particularly focusing on younger drivers,” Mr. Vine continued.

“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.

“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.

“In relation to seatbelt use, there appears to be a misguided belief that those seated in the rear of vehicles are less vulnerable. Most worryingly, this invariably puts children at greater risk. Drivers should be in no doubt that they and their passengers - whatever age they may be - must be seated and restrained safely, no matter how short their journey.

“With regard to speeding, I would urge all motorists to be aware of the associated dangers, especially on rural roads, where a high proportion of serious crashes occur.

“Today 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."

## **BACKGROUNDER ON YOUNG DRIVER STATISTICS – 2005 & 2006**

In 2005, there were 93 road deaths and 1,056 serious injury cases involving young people under 24 years of age, according to reported casualties statistics provided by Transport Scotland's Transport Statistics Department. (Based on additional information used to develop Table 24, "*Road Accidents Scotland 2005*", "*Casualties by mode of transport, age-group, severity and sex, Years: 1994-98 average, 2005*", pages 130-131.)

Of the 93 road deaths in 2005, 82 (88%) were in the 16 to 24-year-old age group with 698 serious injuries (65%) in that same age group.

Fatalities / serious injuries in this age group during that year included:

- 15 / 352 pedestrians;
- 5 / 48 pedal cyclists;
- 0 / 89 motorcyclists;
- 39 / 264 car or taxi drivers;
- 30 / 278 car or taxi passengers;
- 1 / 13 bus/coach/minibus drivers or passengers; and,
- 3 / 12 goods vehicles drivers or passengers.

During 2005, there were 3,981 accidents involving drivers between 17 and 25 years of age. This group represents nearly 25 per cent of the total number of accidents (16,714).

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.

Statistics for 2006 have been extracted from the Scottish Executive's "Statistical Bulletin – Transport Series", Trn / 2007 / 3, published June 2007, "Key 2006 Road Accident Statistics".

### **NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS:**

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 ONLY on Thursday 21 June after 2:00 p.m. He will NOT be available on Friday.

Incidents of note will be distributed shortly after the day of action.