



## **LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE** **April 15, 2026**

### ***Buckle Up in Your Truck: LHSC wants to put survival odds in pickup drivers' favor***

The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission wants to convince pickup truck drivers to put motor vehicle crash survival odds in their favor during Buckle Up in Your Truck Week.

If words don't persuade pickup truck drivers to wear their seat belts, law enforcement officers across Louisiana will pull those drivers over and give them \$50 tickets during the statewide enforcement campaign, which runs April 18-25.

Pickup truck drivers in Louisiana who wear their seat belts are more than nine times more likely to survive a motor vehicle crash than those who do not buckle up, according to information from the latest seat belt observational survey and the Center for Analytics and Research in Transportation Safety at LSU.

The latest survey says 17.9% of pickup truck drivers in Louisiana do not buckle up. Yet, statistics from CARTS show 65.2% of pickup truck drivers who died in crashes in which seat belt usage could be determined were not buckled up.

Those numbers are consistent with statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which estimated that 61% of pickup truck occupants who were killed in 2023 were not buckled up.

"There is a myth that pickup truck drivers are safe without their seat belts because their vehicles are so large," said LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman. "However, most pickup driver deaths across the country and in Louisiana are linked to not wearing a seat belt. That tells you how serious this issue is."

Pickup trucks are extremely popular in Louisiana, with 1.14 million pickups registered in the state, according to the Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles. That's more than the number of sedans and vans registered, and just less than the number of sport utility vehicles in the state.

Although Louisiana set a record in 2025 for the highest seat belt usage in the state's history, pickup truck drivers continue to drag down those numbers. While the statewide front-seat seat belt usage average for all vehicles, is 88.4%, pickup truck drivers and front-seat passengers use their seat belts 82.7% of the time, according to the survey.

"We also see a higher incidence of seat belt non-use among young male pickup drivers," Freeman said. "This is a real concern when you also factor in that pickup trucks tend to be more prone to rollover crashes, which can eject a driver who's not properly secured."

Throughout the Buckle Up in Your Truck campaign, law enforcement agencies in Louisiana will have extra patrols on the roads specifically looking for unbuckled motor vehicle occupants. In Louisiana, not

wearing your seat belt — regardless of the vehicle you're in or which seat you occupy — can get you a \$50 ticket for a first-time offense.

“Our goal is to keep everyone safe and to encourage all drivers and passengers to buckle up in every seat, every time,” Freeman said. “The \$50 ticket is just an added incentive for those who haven't developed the seat belt habit, yet.”

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