



## LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE

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### **“Buckle Up in Your Truck” campaign addresses “safety double whammy”**

Pickup trucks are twice as likely to roll over in a crash, and Louisiana pickup truck drivers and passengers are less likely to wear their seat belts, creating “a safety double whammy” that the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission is addressing through a seat belt enforcement campaign.

“It truly is a safety double whammy because some of our most vulnerable drivers and passengers are least likely to protect themselves,” LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman said. “Through the Buckle Up in Your Truck campaign, law enforcement officers will be looking for pickup truck drivers and passengers who aren’t wearing their seat belts, and they will be handing out tickets across the state.”

“Buckle Up in Your Truck” begins on Sunday, April 18 and lasts through Sunday, April 25. The fine for not wearing a seat belt in Louisiana is \$50.00, and subsequent offenses carry a \$75.00 fine plus court costs.

The 2019 Louisiana Seat Belt Observation Survey shows that pickup truck occupants wear their seat belts 8.8 percent less frequently than occupants of other vehicles. In 2019, 120 pickup truck drivers and passengers were killed in crashes, according to the Center for Analytics and Research in Transportation Safety at LSU, and half of those drivers were not wearing their seat belts.

The 120 pickup truck occupant deaths in 2019 represent the lowest number of pickup fatalities since the state began keeping such records in 1997 and also reflect a trending decline for the past 10 years. Freeman attributed the decline to enhanced safety features in newer model trucks, stricter enforcement of the seat belt law, and an increase in seat belt usage among pickup truck occupants.

“Fewer injuries and fewer deaths are good; even fewer is better, and none is best,” Freeman said. “The best way to protect yourself in a crash is to wear a seat belt.”

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