

**West Traffic Division  
Captain's Message  
November 2015**

Due to the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday travel, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) focus this month is Occupant Protection. The primary message for the month is *"Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time."*

***Seat belts save over 13,000 lives every year. One of them could be yours...***

The following are the Top 5 facts you should know about buckling up:

1. **Buckling up is the single most effective action you can take to protect yourself in a crash.** During a crash, being buckled up helps keep you safe and secure inside your vehicle, whereas being completely thrown out of a vehicle is almost always deadly. Seat belts are the best defense against impaired, aggressive, and distracted drivers.
2. **Air bags are designed to work WITH seat belts, NOT replace them.** In fact, if you don't wear your seat belt, you could be thrown into a rapidly opening frontal air bag; a movement of such force could injure or even kill you. See <http://www.safercar.gov> for more on air bag safety.
3. **How to buckle up safely:** Place the shoulder belt across the middle of your chest and away from your neck. Adjust the lap belt across your hips below your stomach. NEVER put the shoulder belt behind your back or under your arm.
4. **Fit matters.**
  - ✓ Before you buy a new car, check to see that its seat belts are a good fit for you.
  - ✓ Ask your dealer about seat belt adjusters, which can help you get the best fit.
  - ✓ If you need a roomier belt, contact your vehicle manufacturer to obtain seat belt extenders.
  - ✓ If you drive an older or classic car with lap belts only, check with your vehicle manufacturer about how to retrofit your car with today's safer lap/shoulder belts.
5. **Occupant protection is for everyone.** Visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Web site at [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov) and click on **4 Steps for Kids** to find out how to secure your littlest passengers. If you're expecting a baby, check out NHTSA's *"Should pregnant women wear seat belts?"* brochure online to learn how important it is for you — and your unborn child — to buckle up the right way every trip, every time.

Because use of child restraints is so vital, a unit of officers assigned to Community Traffic Services Unit (CTSU) conducts special educational programs and provides child restraint devices to lower income families. If you would like to have your child's safety seat installed or inspected for proper installation, schedule an appointment with CTSU at **213-473-0543**. Also, please see CTSU's Web Page under the "About West Traffic" heading, listed on the West Traffic Division Newsletter Web Page. Some important child restraint laws to note are as follows:

- California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section **27360** establishes the requirements for child passenger restraints. If the child is not yet six years old or does not weigh at least 60 pounds, he or she must be properly secured in a child safety seat or booster seat, whichever restraint system fits the child. Never use a booster seat that has been in an accident, as the seat may have defects that are not visible.
- Section **27360.5 CVC** requires that a child who weighs 60 pounds or more, or who is at least six years old but fewer than 16 years of age, use a safety belt or be in an appropriate passenger restraint system that meets applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards when transported in a vehicle.
- In addition, Section **15600 CVC**, and CVC Division 6.7 established Kaitlyn's Law, which prohibits leaving a child six years of age or under in a motor vehicle if there are conditions that present a risk. These risks include, but are not limited to; closed windows on a hot day, the engine left running, or if the key is left in the ignition. The primary purpose of this law is to prevent injuries to children from the effects of being left alone in a vehicle.

The following events are being sponsored by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) during the month of November:

- **Drowsy Driving Prevention Week**, sponsored by the National Sleep Foundation, is scheduled for **November 1 – 8**.
- Additionally, NHTSA's pre-holiday season impaired driving enforcement detail "**Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving**" is scheduled for **November 28 – December 15**.

The areas within Operations-West Bureau and West Traffic Division are Hollywood, Wilshire, West Los Angeles, Pacific, and Olympic Areas. Any of the geographical areas' Web Pages can also be accessed via <http://www.LAPOnline.org>. If you have traffic safety concerns in a particular area, you may contact CTSU at 213-473-0215 or West Traffic Division at 213-473-0222 to voice your concerns. Please check the Crime Prevention Circular for the areas that are of particular interest to you.

#### **Traffic Tips**

- \* **LOOK both ways twice before crossing the street.**
- \* **ALWAYS wear your seatbelt.**
- \* **DON'T drink and drive.**
- \* **Do NOT use handheld devices such as cell phones, MP3 players or GPS units while driving.**
- \* **WATCH OUT for pedestrians crossing streets in and outside of crosswalks, especially at night.**
- \* **Please SLOW DOWN. Speed kills.**

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