

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Click It Or Ticket: Police Monitoring Territory's Roads For Seat Belt Offenders

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ST. CROIX -- Wear your seat belts or get ticketed -- anywhere from \$75 to \$500, according to the Virgin Islands Office of Highway Safety (OHS).

OHS kicked off its Click It or Ticket campaign at a press conference on Tuesday, held at the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD) conference room in Frederiksted. The campaign started on May 18 and runs until May 31 throughout the territory, while the U.S. campaign lasts for one week.

The effort was tapered in recent years, however, OHS' Territorial Occupant Protection Coordinator, Leslie Dickenson, said the campaign had to be elevated because her office,

[through surveys conducted](#), has noticed a drastic decrease in the use of seat belts in the territory.

On a whole, the territory is at a 66 percent seat belt usage rate, and Dickenson said OHS is targeting the remaining 33 percent of the community through the new campaign.

The Click It or Ticket It drive is funded through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which is then channeled through OHS, and provides funding for the VIPD to conduct the various initiatives. According to Dickenson, OHS spends roughly \$60,000-\$70,000 on the drive every year. The office also has smaller efforts throughout the year ranging anywhere from \$20,000 to \$30,000 in cost.

U.S. law requires that children 13 years old and younger sit in the back seat of vehicles, properly restrained. Dickenson said the VIPD will be out "day and night" at designated locations "to cite violators of this law," and other vehicle occupancy laws.

Traffic Commander Lt. Joseph Platt said the areas where VIPD officers are stationed during the campaign cannot be revealed in order to prevent giving away police strategy. According to Platt, aside from the special Click It or Ticket initiative, which allows officers to make overtime money through OHS, officers are regularly stationed at various locations in the territory searching for traffic violators.

Both Platt and Dickenson encouraged motorists to wear seat belts at all times, and revealed that for the first quarter of 2015, 8 vehicular accidents occurred where three of the occupants were unrestrained, resulting in a total of 5 fatalities.

Feature Image: From Left, Traffic Lt. Commander Joseph Platt and OHS' Territorial Occupant Protection Coordinator, Leslie Dickenson, at a press conference to launch the Click It or Ticket campaign.