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VIPD Increases Seatbelt Enforcement as Part of National 'Click It or Ticket, Border to Border' Initiative

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The V.I.P.D. will be increasing seatbelt enforcement as part of the national "Click It or Ticket, Border to Border" (B2B) initiative being administered locally in collaboration with the V.I. Office of Highway Safety. The heightened enforcement runs from May 24 through June 6, and motorists are encouraged to buckle up to avoid being ticketed.

According to police spokesman Toby Derima, each year, the V.I. Office of Highway Safety conducts an annual seatbelt observational survey to determine seatbelt usage rates in the territory. In 2020, the groups with the lowest seatbelt usage rates included males (61.6 percent) and light pickup truck drivers (57.4 percent). Nighttime drivers are also prone to use seat belts less often, the survey found.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), seatbelt use is proven to reduce the risk of crash-related injuries and fatalities. In 2019, the national seat belt usage rate was 90.7 percent — 19.6 percentage points higher than the territory's 2019 usage rate of 71.1 percent. This comparatively low usage rate further dropped to 68.2 percent in 2020.

According to the release, although the territory lacks the complexity of roads found on the mainland, crashes occur regularly. In 2020, there were 3,652 crashes in the territory with reportedly 214 involving unrestrained occupants. Of the territory's 14 fatal crashes recorded in 2020, 43 percent of the victims were unrestrained.

Motorists are responsible for ensuring seatbelt compliance for themselves and their passengers, the release stated. It takes three seconds to fasten a seatbelt — a habit that can save a lifetime of regret.

In 2019, the VI Code was amended to require seatbelt use for all back seat passengers. "Too many people wrongly believe that seatbelts are not required in the back seat, as it is safer," said the release. "However, unrestrained backseat passengers can become projectiles in a crash hitting the windshield, the dashboard, or injuring other vehicle occupants."

The release said that by adopting a culture of seatbelt safety, "every resident can contribute to the reduction of injuries and fatalities caused by crashes."

Police Commissioner Trevor Velinor supports the consistent use of seatbelts, stating, "Undoubtedly, seatbelts save lives and our motorists and passengers can increase their likelihood of surviving a crash if they simply buckle up."

"Click It or Ticket enforcement activities are not about citations; they are about saving lives," said the release. Learn more about the Click It or Ticket mobilization [here](#).