



PALM BAY POLICE DEPARTMENT ***NEWS RELEASE***

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OFFICERS TO ENFORCE NEW SEAT BELT LAW

(Palm Bay)—Patrol officers and traffic enforcement officers will begin enforcement of the State's new seat belt law effective June 30th which allows officers to use seat belt violations as a primary purpose for stopping a vehicle. The Florida legislature changed the law during the past legislative session making mandatory seat belt use a primary enforceable action. The violation is considered a non-moving violation punishable by a fine of \$104 in Brevard County.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates this primary enforcement action will prevent more than 140 traffic fatalities annually in the State. Florida joins 26 states that already have laws for primary enforcement of safety belts. In 2007 Florida ranked 35th in seat belt usage with a usage rate of approximately 79%. "Hopefully this will make people buckle up," said Traffic Enforcement Officer Jennifer Cordeau. "If they didn't get the message that seat belts save lives, then perhaps hitting them in the wallet will get their attention."

The new law was written for Dori Slosberg and Katie Marchetti who both lost their lives as a result of car crashes that occurred while they were not wearing seat belts. Slosberg died at age 14 in 1996. Marchetti died at age 16 in 2006. "As a crash investigator I see it too often; death from vehicle crashes that could have been prevented had the occupants been wearing a seat belt," Cordeau added.

Patrol officers and traffic enforcement officers will begin strict enforcement of the new law beginning Tuesday.