

It's a Deadly Season for Teen Drivers

Click It or Ticket: May 21-June 3, 2007

With prom and graduation season in full swing, we're also in a deadly and dangerous season for teen drivers. Last year, nearly half of the 71 teen traffic deaths in Colorado occurred in the months of April, May and June. And nearly 68 percent of teens who died did not wear seat belts. If they had buckled up, nearly half should have lived.

"Every day I think about my brother and how he might still be alive today if he had worn his seat belt," said 13-year-old Brittney Ellsworth, whose brother Brian and two other teenagers died unbuckled in a crash four years ago. "Some teens don't wear seat belts because they think it's not cool or that it doesn't really matter, but wearing a seat belt is a one or two second decision that could save your life."

In Colorado, it is the law for all drivers under age 18 and their passengers to wear seat belts. This is a primary enforcement law, which means teens can be pulled over and ticketed specifically for this reason.

From May 21 to June 3, the Colorado Department of Transportation and 100 law enforcement agencies around the state will conduct a special seat belt enforcement called *Click It or Ticket*. No excuses will be accepted and tickets will be issued to anyone not wearing a seat belt. So buckle up and ask your passengers to buckle up. This simple action could save you a ticket or even your life.

Seat belts laws are not the only thing teen drivers need to know. Colorado has Graduated Driver Licensing laws that restrict who can ride with a teen driver; the number of passengers; and the time of day, depending on age and whether you have an instruction permit or a restricted license. For more information about Colorado's teen driving laws, visit www.coteedriver.com.