

News Release
For Immediate Release

Don't Crash the Party on Thanksgiving! Buckling Up Could Save Your Giblets!

As families travel long and short distances to gather together on Thanksgiving and begin the holiday season, the roads become more heavily traveled and the chances for car crashes go up. In fact, the Thanksgiving holiday is one of the most dangerous holidays of the year when it comes to vehicle crashes and fatalities. In Texas in 2018, more than 43% of those killed in traffic crashes were reported as unrestrained. Buckling up is the single most effective step you can take to increase your chances of a safe road trip on Thanksgiving! Taking those few seconds to make sure all of your passengers, young and old, are buckled up, as well as keeping your focus on driving and preparing ahead for the trip, can make all the difference.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Community Health Educator Kay Rogers, Dallam & Hartley Counties reminds motorists to give driving your full attention, buckle up, check road and weather conditions, and protect yourself and others on the road. Follow these steps to make sure you arrive alive:

- **Prepare.** Make sure your car and tires are in good condition and that roads and visibility are clear. If using a GPS device, enter your destination before you start to drive. If you prefer a map or written directions, review them in advance.
- **Make sure all passengers are buckled up correctly.** Passengers in the back seat need to buckle up — it's the law! Make sure children are in appropriate car seats for their age, height, weight and developmental stage.
- **Turn it off and stow it.** Turn your phone off or switch it to silent mode before you get in the car. Then stow it away so that it's out of reach.
- **Pull over.** If you need to make a call, first pull over to a safe area.
- **Secure your pets.** Unsecured pets are not only dangerous to themselves and other passengers, they can also be a big distraction in the car.
- **Mind the kids.** Pull over to a safe place to address situations involving children in the car.
- **Focus on driving.** Multi-tasking behind the wheel is dangerous. Refrain from eating, drinking, reading, grooming, smoking, and any other activity that takes your mind and eyes off the road.

As a reminder to buckle up, the Click It or Ticket campaign will be in force during the holiday weekend with extra officers on patrol to increase awareness and enforcement of the seat belt and car seat laws. The key message of the effort is that surviving your Thanksgiving drive this year — and making it to next Thanksgiving — can be as simple as buckling up!