

## **Buckling Up - The Cost to California**

By  
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If you ever wondered how three seconds can save millions and millions of dollars, consider this: while California has a seat belt usage rate of 90.4 percent, the sixth highest in the nation, there are more than three million people in the State who don't buckle up. three million. And we know that when used properly, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injuries to front seat passengers by 44 percent. And each critically injured person costs society roughly \$1.1 million over their lifetime, including insurance costs, lost workplace and household productivity and other injury related costs.

Who are we kidding? One of the smartest things we can do to save lives, prevent serious injuries and save the State money is to buckle up. And we're turning up the heat. For the first time ever, California is taking part in the **Click It or Ticket** campaign, May 16<sup>th</sup>-June 5<sup>th</sup>. During this three-week period, local law enforcement agencies throughout California, including the California Highway Patrol, will ramp up efforts, placing the greatest number of officers on the roads *ever*, specifically looking for unbelted motorists and passengers.

And a seat belt citation isn't cheap. In fact, the fine has tripled to between \$78-\$89, depending on the county. And if you've got passengers under 16 in the car and are caught, the fine is about \$350 – whether or not you're the parent. That means if you're carting around your 12-year old son and two of his buddies, you're looking at upwards of \$1,000.

So take the three seconds to buckle up and save yourself and the rest of us some money – not to mention your life.