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## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 28, 2024

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# Safety first in vehicles: Buckle up, phone down

Put safety first when getting into a vehicle and participate in Buckle Up Phone Down (BUPD) Day, recognized across the country on Oct. 30. The Kansas Department of Transportation and the Drive To Zero (DTZ) Coalition challenge all travelers to ditch distractions and focus on safety.

Drivers will see increased enforcement of seat belt and child restraint usage as well as texting laws across the state as law enforcement officials are partnering in this effort. The goal is to bring awareness to these two simple actions – buckling up and putting the phone down – to help reduce traffic fatalities.

“I’m asking all Kansans to join me in this special day. This simple reminder is something we can all do and should continue to do,” said KDOT Transportation Secretary Calvin Reed. “Buckle up, put the phone down. Every trip. Every time.”

In Kansas, 387 people died in crashes in 2023. According to KDOT stats, 134 were not belted or restrained.

“These numbers are concerning. All passengers should be buckled up and children should be properly restrained in car seats,” said Secretary Reed. “It only takes a few moments to make sure everyone in the vehicle is properly restrained, then put the phone away. It’s the most effective thing you can do to prevent injury in a traffic crash.”

Distracted driving is another problem throughout the state. Last year there were nearly 14,000 crashes involving distracted driving. Driving while using cell phones, eating, reading, applying makeup or distractions from others in the vehicle resulted in more than 300 serious injuries and 99 fatalities.

The DTZ Coalition and KDOT take part in safety education campaigns throughout the year to encourage everyone to actively support these lifesaving messages. Follow KDOT social media and join the BUPD promotion by using hashtags #BUPD and #BUPDDay.

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