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## **Wearing Seat Belts Pays Off**

*Youth Seat Belt Campaign Encourages Teens to Make It Click*

JEFFERSON CITY – In addition to potentially saving your life, getting caught wearing your seat belt on Friday, March 11 could have a second payoff. Two hundred winners at high schools around the state will receive a \$25 gift card when they are spotted buckled up.

Here's how it works: 175,000 window clings were distributed at Missouri high schools in preparation for Seat Belt Spotter Day on March 11. Teams of spotters will be out looking for 200 random teens wearing their seat belts and prominently displaying a seat belt window cling.

Seat Belt Spotter Day is part of the youth seat belt campaign that kicks off this month. The campaign includes a combination of education and enforcement. Law enforcement will be out in full force March 15-31 to crack down on unbelted teenage drivers.

Under the Graduated Driver License Law, teens are required to wear their seat belt and it's a primary offense, meaning they can be pulled over solely for not wearing their seat belt. Teen seat belt use in Missouri is only 66 percent, much lower than state (76 percent) and national (85 percent) seat belt use.

Teens are hitting the road with increased frequency, heading to school, sporting events, extracurricular activities, part-time jobs and other events that fill their social calendars.

Young people are inexperienced and feel invincible and without a seat belt, the combination can be deadly. Over the last three years (2008-2010), 285 teens were killed in Missouri traffic crashes. Seven out of ten teens killed in Missouri traffic crashes were not wearing a seat belt.

“We all know teens who continue to take the ‘it will never happen to me’ attitude, putting themselves at great risk by not buckling up,” said Leanna Depue, chair of the executive committee of the Coalition. “But the sad truth is, fatal crashes can and do happen to teens every day.”

Visit [saveMOLives.com](http://saveMOLives.com) to find out more information. Buckle up and Arrive Alive.

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