



WPD NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**** Media Advisory ****

WPD set to enforce new seatbelt ordinance

Wichita Police officers have begun enforcing a revised City ordinance that now allows them to stop a passenger vehicle when they observe someone inside between the ages of 14-17 not wearing a seatbelt, it was announced today by Patrol West Sergeant Jerry Quick.

“On January 1, the City of Wichita’s seatbelt ordinance was amended to reflect the changes made to the state statute. The amended ordinance allows officers to stop vehicles with unrestrained passengers from 14 through 17 years of age as the primary reason for a traffic stop,” said Quick. “The ticket for such violations, which carries a \$60 fine, including court costs, goes directly to the unrestrained person and not the driver.”

State and City laws now allow officers to stop a vehicle if any passenger and/or driver age 17 and younger are observed in a passenger vehicle unrestrained. Fines for such violations, which fall under the Child Passenger Safety Act for passengers younger than 14, are \$60 per unrestrained passenger. Tickets for violators younger

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than 14 go to the driver of the vehicle.

Officers, however, still must have observed another violation as the primary reason to stop a vehicle in which the driver or any passenger 18 and older is unrestrained. That primary violation must also be cited on the ticket. Such seatbelt violations carry a fine of \$30, including court costs.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children between 2 and 14 years of age. A total of 1,794 children died in traffic crashes in the U.S. in 2006. In Kansas, 18 children died in traffic wrecks that year.

“Our goal is to make Wichita a safe and secure community,” said Quick. “We applaud those who wear seat belts. They are setting a good example by their concern for safety.”