

AgriLife Extension safety expert: Pickups rock! Unfortunately, they also roll

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Texans have a love affair with pickups, and while residents of the Lone Star State think these vehicles ‘rock,’ they also need to know that they roll, said a Texas AgriLife Extension Service safety expert.

“Even though pickups are larger than cars and their owners tend to feel safer in them, they are twice as likely to roll over as passenger cars,” said Bev Kellner, AgriLife Extension program specialist-passenger safety at Texas A&M University in College Station.

Kellner said about one in four vehicles registered in Texas is a pickup truck. And according to a 2011 study conducted by the Texas Transportation Institute, only 80 percent of pickup truck drivers buckle up, as compared with more than 90 percent of regular seat belt users in all other types of vehicles.

“Pickup truck drivers and their passengers also typically have a lower seat-belt usage rate than drivers of other types of vehicles,” she said. “Statistically, pickup truck drivers and passengers are the least likely to buckle up. Also, one out of every two pickup truck drivers killed in a traffic crash in 2010 was not wearing a seat belt.”

Kellner said the lower overall seat belt use by pickup drivers is likely a combination of the false sense of security and an incorrect belief that seat belts don’t need to be used during short trips.

“Pickup [truck drivers](#) and passengers also tend to be younger, male

drivers who are either not getting or are disregarding the well-known fact that seat belts save lives,” she said. “And pickup crashes can be especially serious – even deadly – due to their tendency to roll over and for unbelted occupants to be thrown from the vehicle.”

Click It or Ticket is a two-week-long program designed to emphasize the ease – and cost effectiveness – of using a seat belt, Kellner said, adding that AgriLife Extension supports the campaign and is working in partnership to help promote its positive messages about seat belt use.

She noted that this marks the eleventh year of the Click It or Ticket campaign in Texas, and that the campaign has saved an estimated 2,843 lives statewide and has prevented more than 48,000 serious injuries from car crashes.

The Click It or Ticket campaign time frame includes the Memorial Day weekend, and this year the campaign is scheduled for May 21-June 3. During this time, extra law enforcement representatives will be on the roads enforcing the seat belt and child restraint laws in an effort to save lives.

“The campaign will also stress that under Texas law seat belt use is now required for both front seat and back seat passengers,” Kellner said. “Fines for noncompliance can range from \$25 dollars to \$250 dollars. Motorists can save money and, more importantly, save lives by buckling up on every trip.”

Provided by Texas A&M University

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