

DETROIT NATIVE SUN

Click it or Ticket seat belt enforcement begins May 15

OHSP reminds drivers, passengers to buckle up every trip, every time To remind everyone about the importance of buckling up, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) has announced a “Click It or Ticket” seat belt enforcement campaign that will run from May 15 to June 4.

Officers from police departments, sheriff’s offices and the Michigan State Police will be conducting seat belt enforcement across the state during the three-week period, which includes Memorial Day weekend.

In Michigan, 254 people who were killed in traffic crashes during 2021 were not wearing a seat belt, according to the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute. That is an increase of 11.4 percent over 2020, when there were 228 fatalities.

“Wearing a seat belt is the most effective thing you can do to reduce injuries and save lives—and buckling up should be an automatic habit for drivers and passengers alike,” said Katie Bower, OHSP director. “It’s not just the safe thing to do—it’s the law.”

During the 2021 Memorial Day weekend, there were 14 fatal crashes on Michigan roadways that resulted in 14 fatalities. From 2019 to 2022, the seat belt usage rate in Michigan fell from 94.4 percent to 92.9 percent. There are nearly 30 Michigan counties that fall below the state usage rate. See the OHSP website for more details. The national seat belt usage rate in 2021 was 90.4 percent.

“As the busy summer travel season gets underway, we want to remind drivers and passengers to stay safe and wear a seat belt, every trip, every time,” Bower added.

Men make up the majority of those killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes nationwide. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2020, 67 percent of the 23,824 passenger-vehicle occupants who were killed were men. Men use seat belts at a lower rate than women do—55 percent of men killed in crashes were unrestrained, compared to 43 percent of women killed in crashes.

In addition, young adults are at a higher risk of being killed because of riding unrestrained. Sixty percent of young adults aged 18 to 34 who were killed in 2020 while riding in passenger vehicles were not buckled up—one of the highest percentages for all age groups.

NHTSA estimates that buckling up in the front seat can reduce the risk of serious injury or death in a crash by 45 percent.

Michigan law requires drivers, front-seat passengers, and passengers 15 and younger in any seating position to be buckled up. The fine and associated costs for not wearing a seat belt is \$65. Children must be in a car seat or booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4’ 9” tall. Children under 4 years old must be in the back seat.

The OHSP coordinates the “Click It or Ticket” effort, which is supported by federal traffic safety funds.

One Detroit Partnership to reduce violent crime in the Detroit

DETROIT — Last month, United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison, along with Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney Kym Worthy, Kenyatta Stephens, CEO Black Family Development, Detroit Police Chief James E. White, Alvin Stokes, Citywide President, Detroit Citywide Police Community Relations Council, Heidi E. Washington, Director of the Michigan Department of Corrections and Bishop Edgar Vann, Second Ebenezer Church, announced a community partnership named “One Detroit” designed to reduce violent crime in the City through a multi-faceted program of crime prevention, services for the re-entry of returning citizens, and focused law enforcement.

Joining in the announcement were Kenyatta Stephens, the Chief Executive Officer of Black Family Development, Inc.; Special Agent in Charge James A. Tarasca, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Detroit Division; Special Agent in Charge James M. Deir, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Detroit Division; Orville O. Greene, Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration, Detroit Division; and Sheryl Jones, Director, Detroit Youth Violence Prevention Initiative and Ceasefire Detroit.

One Detroit is the U.S. Attorney’s Office’s comprehensive violence reduction initiative that links evidenced-based strategies with a coalition of stakeholders in the community, government, and law enforcement. The core of the initiative is partnership. By bringing together leaders in government, the community, and law enforcement, and aligning their work, the One Detroit partnership will work to reduce violence through engagement, coordination, and action.

The One Detroit partnership is an effort to reinvigorate and augment the Detroit One initiative by incorporating the lessons we have learned since that effort was announced 10 years ago. One Detroit, like the earlier effort, includes aggressive investigation and prosecution of the relatively small number of individuals responsible for the most violence. But the One Detroit partners recognize that violence must be prevented and not just punished. And so, the One Detroit partners will also develop and foster meaningful community relationships, promote prevention and intervention programs, and emphasize prisoner reentry programs that involve the community.

One Detroit will focus on leveraging the resources, skills, and capacities of the program’s stakeholders to reduce crime and to make our residents and city safer.

A key aspect of this strategy is to boost efforts at crime prevention. The One Detroit prevention effort, which is led by the City of Detroit, along with community leaders such as Bishop Vann and Black Family Development, will seek to reduce crime through blight elimination, community engagement, job training, and collaboration. The partnership includes community members, faith leaders, law enforcement, and representatives from intervention/outreach organizations. Through open dialogue with these partners, we will better understand the underlying causes of violent crime in the community and collaborate to develop comprehensive solutions to address them. The partners will deter violence through open communication about law enforcement strategies with the community and with those most at risk of becoming involved in violence. And the partners will work to provide alternatives to crime to those in neighborhoods most affected by violence.

Importantly, One Detroit will also be focused on providing opportunities and assistance to those citizens who are returning to our community from incarceration. Led by the Michigan Department of Corrections, One Detroit will work to en-

sure that returning citizens have the employment, job training, and support they need to fully reintegrate into society. Helping those who have served their time return to their families and become contributing members of their communities is one of the most effective means to reduce crime in Detroit and across the Eastern District of Michigan.

The third aspect of One Detroit is an enforcement strategy aimed at the most dangerous offenders in those areas of the city suffering the most from violent crime or that face the prospect of increased crime. The One Detroit partnership will work collaboratively to focus its law enforcement efforts on the relatively few individuals and groups inflicting the most violence, rather than the entire community. It will involve close coordination between federal and local law enforcement to identify emerging violent offenders or trends within particular neighborhoods. The partnership will also draw on the expertise of local officers, who have deep experience in the communities they serve. And it will pair that personalized knowledge with technology like the National Integrated Ballistics Identification Network (NIBIN), and evidence-based tools like Gunstat. By implementing this data-driven and intelligence-led approach, law enforcement will be able to focus on the small number of people perpetrating violence.

This strategy is a part of the U.S. Attorney’s Office’s Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) initiative. PSN continues to be the centerpiece of the Department of Justice’s violent crime reduction efforts. Through PSN, a broad spectrum of stakeholders works together to identify the most pressing violent crime problems and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. PSN is an evidence-based program that focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs to pursue lasting reductions in crime.

“One Detroit seeks to disrupt violence in our neighborhoods by focusing law enforcement resources on the drivers of violent crime, supporting community-based solutions to prevent crime, and ensuring that individuals returning from prison have sufficient supports to take full advantage of their second chances,” stated U.S. Attorney Dawn Ison. “We need a more mindful approach to violence reduction that acknowledges that law enforcement cannot be the only solution to keeping our communities safe. Through this partnership we will continue to aggressively prosecute those who refuse to stop the violence, but we also endeavor to empower communities and provide opportunity in order to make our community and residents safer,” continued Ison.

“The most sustainable way to reduce violent crime is to get the people committing it to change their own behavior,” said Mayor Duggan. “For some, being provided a pathway to an opportunity after being incarcerated may lead to that change. For others it may be the certainty of being arrested and incarcerated if they reoffend. Effective crime reduction has to be a communitywide effort and I’m grateful to U.S. Attorney Dawn Ison for her leadership in forming this partnership between law enforcement agencies and community organizations.”

“As a One Detroit partner, Black Family Development, Inc. commits to provide basic needs (food, clothing, shelter), mental health and substance use treatment, mobile health services, a young men of color support network and social-emotional counseling as prevention and re-entry supports to Detroit residents and families impacted, or at-risk of being impacted, by gun violence,” said Kenyatta Stephens stated.

End of Federal COVID-19 public health emergency Brings changes to insurance coverage in Michigan

(LANSING, MICH) The Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS) is alerting consumers that there may be changes to their health insurance coverage for COVID-related testing and treatments now that the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) has ended.

“The protections enacted under the federal Public Health Emergency helped millions of Michiganders access lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines, treatment, and testing,” said DIFS Director Anita Fox. “Going forward, it is important that Michiganders understand that their coverage for these important services may have changed. DIFS stands ready to assist consumers with any questions or concerns about their health insurance. Our live call center can be reached Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., by calling 877-999-6442.”

Federal law required that many health services related to COVID-19, including testing and vaccinations, had to be covered at no cost for the duration of the PHE. Many Michiganders may now have to pay out-of-pocket for some COVID-related care. For more specific information about different types of medical care that have been affected by the ending of the PHE, see below:

At-Home and Laboratory COVID Tests:
Private Insurers: The federal mandate requiring health insurers to provide no-cost coverage for COVID-19 testing, including at-home tests, has ended. Most people with health insurance will continue to have coverage for laboratory COVID-19 tests, subject to the plan’s cost sharing. At-home testing for COVID-19 is an eligible medical expense for flexible spending arrangements (FSAs) and health savings accounts (HSAs). Michiganders should check with their plan for more details.

• Medicare: Medicare is no longer required to provide coverage for at-home COVID-19 testing. Medicare Part B participants can still obtain laboratory COVID-19 testing, with authorization by a medical provider, without out-of-pocket cost. Medicare Advantage participants may have additional flexibility regarding COVID-19 testing. Michiganders should check with their plan for more details.

• Medicaid: Under federal law, Medicaid and MICHild participants can obtain at-home and laboratory COVID-19 tests through September 30, 2024.

COVID-19 Treatments:
• Private insurers: Treatment for COVID-19 will continue to be covered but insurers are now able to apply cost sharing, such as deductibles and coinsurance, and require prior approval for these treatments. Michiganders should confirm coverage with their insurer or plan before seeking treatment.
• Medicare: Medicare beneficiaries may have to pay for a portion of their COVID-19 care as required by their plan.
• Medicaid: Medicaid and MICHild are required to cover all drugs for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19 with no cost sharing for enrollees through September 30, 2024.

COVID-19 Vaccinations:
COVID-19 vaccinations continue to be supplied with no out-of-pocket cost by the federal government.

DIFS can help consumers with health insurance questions and complaints. Contact DIFS Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 877-999-6442 or Michigan.gov/HealthInsurance. For more information about the state’s Medicaid and MICHild programs, visit the MIBridges website.

