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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Buckle Up: It's 'Click it or Ticket' Time

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly University Police are participating in this year's annual "Click it or Ticket" seatbelt safety campaign.

Surveys show that 90 percent of Californians wear their seatbelts. The annual campaign is aimed at the 10 percent who don't -- and place themselves at risk for serious injury or death in auto accidents as a result. In 2002, 1,343 Californians who weren't buckled into seatbelts lost their lives in auto crashes.

Other law enforcement agencies in the county, including the San Luis Obispo City Police Department, are also participating in the campaign. UPD received a grant from the state to allow the university to participate in this year's effort.

That means UPD staff will be out around campus May 9-15 monitoring for the number of drivers who don't buckle up. During the "Click it or Ticket" campaign May 16-June 5, officers will be writing tickets to those who don't -- no matter how short the on-campus drive. UPD will be out monitoring drivers on campus June 6-12, and hope to see seatbelt use rates up.

"What we're trying to do is remind students, faculty and staff that seatbelts should be automatic," said UPD Chief Tony Aeilts. "It is very important for people to know that most accidents happen close to home or work and even a short trip demands the use of seatbelts."

In California, the maximum fine for a seatbelt violation ticket for those age 16 and older is $89 for a first offense, and up to $191 for a second offense.

The fine for drivers ticketed for child passengers (under age 16) not buckled into seatbelts is $340 on first offense, and $871 for second offense. "There really is no excuse when it comes to children and seatbelts," Aeilts reminded. "For safety, all children need to be buckled into a safety belt or a child safety seat."

For more details about the "Click it or Ticket" campaign, contact University Police Department Crime Prevention Officer Larry Ponting at 756-6678.

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