



KAY IVEY  
GOVERNOR

## ALABAMA LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

201 SOUTH UNION STREET, SUITE 300 | P.O. BOX 304115 | MONTGOMERY, AL 36130-4115  
PHONE 334.676.6000 | WWW.ALEA.GOV



HAL TAYLOR  
SECRETARY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **‘You Do Have a Choice’ National Passenger Safety Week**

*ALEA Joins National Campaign to Empower Passengers to Take Responsibility for Their Own Safety*

**MONTGOMERY** – Passengers accounted for 62 percent of traffic fatalities nationwide in 2019, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. It’s imperative that passengers take responsibility for their own safety, in conjunction with being aware of how to avoid dangerous situations as a passenger.

That’s why the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) is participating in National Passenger Safety Week, which began Sunday, Jan. 22, and runs through Saturday, Jan. 28.

“Passengers have the ability to keep themselves safe, and it begins with always making the decision to buckle up. Seat belts save lives,” ALEA’s Secretary Hal Taylor said. “This week is dedicated to empowering individuals to take a proactive and intentional approach to passenger safety. Sadly, there have been countless lives lost in traffic crashes that were completely preventable. Bringing awareness to passenger safety is truly the principal reason our Agency supports this important initiative. Passengers should never get into a vehicle with an impaired driver, and they should remember they always have a choice and the ability to discourage such dangerous driving behaviors as texting, speeding and even driving while drowsy.”

National Passenger Safety Week was launched last January by We Save Lives and The National Road Safety Foundation, two non-profits that focus on crash prevention and saving lives. ALEA is joining more than 60 traffic safety and advocacy groups nationwide who are helping encourage and empower passengers to take responsibility for their own safety. This initiative includes a nationwide media blitz campaign, social media outreach and involvement from groups including the Governors Highway Safety Association, (GHSA), which represents traffic safety offices in all 50 states, the National Safety Council (NSC) and Students Against Destructive Decisions, (SADD) with more than 400,000 student members.

Michelle Anderson, Director of Operations at the National Road Safety Foundation said, “Much of being a safe driver comes from education.” The foundation is a non-profit founded 60 years ago to promote safe driving behaviors through education. “When people are knowledgeable about driving risks like impairment, speed, aggression and drowsiness, there’s a better chance they will avoid taking those risks or letting others do so. The National Passenger Safety Campaign educates and empowers passengers about how they can save lives by calling out unsafe driving in the vehicle before crashes happen,” she said.

We Save Lives, founded by in 2014 by Candace Lightner, is an umbrella organization of more than 50 highway safety advocates, law enforcement agencies, companies, local, state, national and international organizations, victims/survivor groups, and others who want to stop the

carnage on the nation's highways. They have launched a number of campaigns to change driving behaviors, with National Passenger Safety Week being their latest.

The National Road Safety Foundation produces free videos and teaching materials on distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency, pedestrian safety and a host of other safety issues. It also sponsors contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities, partnering nationally with youth advocacy groups including SADD and Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA).

Visit [www.nationalpassengersafety.org](http://www.nationalpassengersafety.org) for more information and tips on passenger safety.

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