**2020 NHTSA OPERATION CRASH REDUCTION**

**SAMPLE NEWS PRE-RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Date]**

**CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, Email Address]**

**Note: Before filling in the names of the organization and organization spokesperson, you MUST contact them for permission to use their names in this press release. Also, you must get their approval for the language of their quotations, and any changes or additions they may require. Only after this is done should you issue the press release.**

**[SHSO/AGENCY] PARTNERS WITH NHTSA:**

***Operation CRASH REDUCTION* Starts OCTOBER 9**

**[City, State]** — Many Americans will take to the roads during the upcoming long weekend in search of that last late summertime adventure. The increased travel means more vehicles on the roads, and data shows an increase in motor vehicle crashes as well. To help drivers and passengers remember the importance of buckling up, **[State/Local Organization]** and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) are teaming up for *Operation Crash Reduction*. This effort is focused on Delaware, the District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia — a region that sees some of the nation’s highest numbers of traffic crash-induced fatalities.

As the holiday weekend nears, **[State/Local Organization]** is reminding all drivers of the importance of seat belt use and other safe driving practices. Not only is it the law in every participating state, but buckling up provides the best defense against injury or death in a crash. This regional campaign runs from October 9 through October 12, and its purpose is to save lives and prevent injuries due to traffic crashes.

According to NHTSA, from 2014 to 2018, this specific set of states had 882 fatal crashes from October 1-15. This is the highest number of fatal crashes for the first 15 days of any month during this same time period. In fact, from 2014 to 2018, October was the most likely month for fatal crashes to occur in these states, with 1,772 total fatal crashes. In these fatal crashes, more than 45% of occupant fatalities in passenger vehicles, trucks, and buses were unrestrained. During that same period in these states, more fatal crashes occurred on the October holiday Weekend (257) than during the holiday periods of Thanksgiving or Memorial Day. This holiday period was the most dangerous of 2018 for these states, with 52 fatal crashes.

“For several years now, we have had this troubling trend in this East Coast region,” said Stephanie Hancock, NHTSA Regional Administrator. “We know that speed, distraction, and impairment are the root causes of most of the crashes in these states. However, seat belt and child safety seat use are your primary sources of protection in crashes caused by a speeding, impaired, or distracted driver.”

“We know that these types of crashes typically occur around national holidays such as Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Thanksgiving,” added **[Local/State or State Highway Safety Office Official].** “However, we were surprised to learn that over the past five years, more fatal crashes occurred in these states during the October holiday weekend than during more highly traveled holidays like Thanksgiving or Memorial Day weekend. That is why we are working with NHTSA and **[State Highway Safety Office and traffic safety partners]** to remind everyone to drive safely and buckle up during the holiday weekend.”

“During *Operation* *Crash Reduction*, we’ll be checking for seat belt use across the state, while educating drivers and passengers on the importance of wearing a seat belt,” said **[Local/State Law Enforcement Official]**. “Seat belts save lives, and everyone — front seat and back, child and adult — should remember to buckle up.”

###