

# **New Bedford Police Receive Public Safety Grant to Increase Enforcement of Seat Belt Law**

The New Bedford Police Department received grant funding from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) to increase seat belt enforcement patrols as part of the national Click It or Ticket campaign taking place May 13th-June 2nd. The New Bedford police will be joined by the Massachusetts State Police and up to 140 other local departments in this high-visibility enforcement effort designed to reduce motor vehicle deaths and injuries.

“Reducing the number of people who are needlessly injured or killed in our community is our priority,” said Chief Joseph Cordeiro. “These funds allow us to put more patrols in high crash locations and stress the importance of buckling up to motorists who are unbuckled.”

The seat belt use rate rose significantly to 81.6 percent in Massachusetts last year, but it still lags well behind the national average of 89.7 percent, according to the state’s annual seat belt observation study.

Sixty-two percent of the 207 people killed in motor vehicle crashes in Massachusetts in 2017 were unrestrained, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Seatbelts saved an estimated 61 lives in Massachusetts in 2017, and an additional 45 deaths could have been prevented if seatbelt usage was at 100 percent.

“The more people who buckle up, the fewer injuries and fatalities on our roads,” said Jeff Larason, Director of the

Highway Safety Division, Office of Grants and Research, EOPSS. "Regardless of how short your trip is, or how good a driver you are, seat belts are critical to your survival if you're ever in a crash."

The current Massachusetts Seat Belt Law requires all motor vehicle occupants to be properly restrained by seat belts when riding in private or commercial vehicles, including vans and trucks. Fines begin at \$25 per violation. The Massachusetts Enhanced Child Passenger Safety Law requires children riding as passengers in motor vehicles to be in a federally-approved child passenger restraint that is properly fastened and secured until they are 8 years old or over 57 inches tall. Children older than 8 years or taller than 57 inches must wear seat belts.

Massachusetts has more than 230 inspection sites where parents and caregivers can have their child's car seat checked for free to ensure it is properly installed. Visit [mass.gov/car-seats](https://mass.gov/car-seats) for a map and listing of all inspection sites.