



For Immediate Release

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MEM Shows Support for Buckle Up/Phone Down Initiative

Columbia, MO— Missouri Employers Mutual joined MoDOT and a group of Missouri mayors today to voice their support for an initiative aimed at getting people to wear their seat belts and put down their cell phones while driving.

“At MEM, our purpose is to get people home safe from work,” said Jennifer Peck, vice president of Marketing and Communication. “We joined the Buckle Up/Phone Down challenge because we’ve seen firsthand that crashes on and off the job have far-reaching negative impacts on employees, their families, their coworkers and their employers.”

Jefferson City Mayor Carrie Tergin spearheaded the effort to promote the Buckle Up/Phone Down campaign, an outreach program the Missouri Department of Transportation implemented more than a year ago. Tergin was joined by Kansas City Mayor Sly James, Springfield Mayor Ken McClure and Florissant Mayor Tom Schneider in voicing support for Buckle Up/Phone Down, also known as BUPD on electronic message boards throughout the state.

“There are two simple acts that can save your life, and the lives of others,” Tergin said. “Buckle up and make sure every passenger in your vehicle is buckled up. If you’re driving, put the phone down.”

Jaylen Butner, a Boonville High School student, supported the mayors’ comments by sharing his personal crash experience. He and a buddy were driving home from football practice when a car in front of them braked. Butner’s friend, the driver, swerved to miss the stopped car and hit a truck head on.

“If I hadn’t put my seat belt on that day, I wouldn’t be here today,” Butner said. “That’s how serious it is.”

Of the 688 people killed on Missouri highways in 2016, 62 percent of them were tragically not wearing their seat belts. In addition, the Missouri Highway Patrol reports that cell phones contributed to 2,470 crashes in Missouri in 2016, and statistics from AAA show texting increases the risk of a car crash by 50 percent.

The financial impacts are also substantial. Traffic crashes cost U.S. employers more than \$40 billion a year, including medical care, liability, lost productivity and property damage, according to Network for

Employers Traffic Safety. MEM, Missouri's #1 work comp provider, insures more than 17,000 Missouri businesses, and the cost of traffic crash claims in 2017 alone totaled more than \$25 million.

Employers have an opportunity to do more in these areas to make a difference.

- Buckle down on your commitment to buckling up in your business. Implement a strong policy requiring employees to wear seat belts when driving on company business—which will help create a habit that carries over to their personal time.
- Ask employees to put away their phones, which means never ask them to participate in business, such as meetings, while behind the wheel.

MoDOT and the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, along with Mayors United for Progress and MEM, urge drivers to take their safety seriously by taking the Buckle Up/Phone Down challenge at modot.org/BuckleUpPhoneDown/. For sample safety policies and other resources, visit www.worksafecenter.com.

About MEM

MEM is a safety company that provides workers compensation insurance. We help policyholders eliminate injuries and reduce claims costs to protect their people and their bottom lines. Headquartered in Columbia, with offices in Springfield, Kansas City and St. Louis, MEM is dedicated to providing policyholders with exceptional customer service, quality loss prevention expertise and timely, personal claims management. For more information on MEM, Missouri's number one provider of workers compensation insurance—visit www.mem-ins.com.

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