



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Kasey Johnson
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Re: HCSO Participating in Operation Southern Slow Down 2024

Date: July 15, 2023

The Hernando County Sheriff's Office is partnering with law enforcement agencies in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, and Tennessee as part of "Operation Southern Slow Down 2024."

"Operation Southern Slow Down" is a week-long speed enforcement awareness campaign. The campaign started Monday and runs through Saturday, July 20th.

This high-visibility enforcement and awareness campaign will work to reduce fatalities and severe injury crashes by ensuring motorists obey speed limits on state and local roadways. Deputies with the Hernando County Sheriff's Office are conducting concentrated enforcement efforts during this period.

Operation Southern Slow Down not only focuses on strict enforcement but also emphasizes the importance of public education in changing driver behavior. Educational efforts are crucial in raising awareness about the dangers of speeding and promoting safer driving habits. By informing the public about the risks associated with speeding and the benefits of adhering to speed limits, we aim to foster a culture of safety on Florida's roads. This dual approach of enforcement and education is designed to create lasting changes in driver behavior to reduce the number of speed-related crashes and save lives.

Important Safety Tips and Reminders:

- o Faster speeds require longer stopping distances.
- o Stopping distance quadruples when you double your speed.
- o Allow more stopping time for larger vehicles, especially on wet or uneven pavement.

- o Slow down when approaching curves and apply brakes before entering the curve.
- o Set a good example for young drivers by adhering to speed limits.
- o Always use your safety belt and ensure all passengers are buckled up.
- o Exercise additional caution in construction and school zones.
- o Plan ahead to avoid peak traffic and give yourself ample time to reach your destination safely.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), speeding has been involved in approximately one-third of all motor vehicle fatalities.

The Critical Impact of Speed and Distracted Driving:

- o When drivers multitask—using a phone, eating, or conversing with a passenger—their reaction time is significantly compromised. At 55 miles per hour, a vehicle requires the length of a football field to come to a complete stop. This distance increases dramatically with higher speeds and distractions.
- o Speed directly impacts the survivability of a crash. For distracted drivers, this could mean the difference between life and serious injury or fatality. A moment of distraction combined with excessive speed can have devastating consequences.
- o Statistics show a strong correlation between speeding, distractions, and fatal crashes. For example, in Florida, 84% of fatalities involving speeding involved male drivers who were speeding at the time of the crash.
- o Law enforcement presence aims to deter speeding and distracted driving. We urge drivers to avoid distractions and prioritize safe driving to prevent crashes.
- o Speeding-related fatalities account for 90% of all fatalities statewide. This underscores the critical impact of speed on road safety.
- o Younger drivers are particularly at risk. Drivers aged 21-25 have the highest percentage of speeding-involved fatalities, followed closely by those aged 16-20 and 26-30. This demographic data is crucial for targeted enforcement and education campaigns.

Speeding isn't just breaking the law; it's a life-threatening behavior. The increased velocity and force of impact in a crash negate the effectiveness of safety equipment like safety belts and airbags. Speeding also leads to less vehicle control, increased stopping distances, and a greater risk to others on the road.

We encourage all Floridians to take responsibility for their safety and the safety of others by making smart driving decisions. Remember, speeding is not just a violation of the law—it significantly increases the risk of crashes and the severity of injuries.

Hernando County Crime Stoppers / Anonymous Tips

If you have information on this case, please contact Hernando County Crime Stoppers. You will remain anonymous!

Hernando County Crime Stoppers can be reached by phone at 1-866-990-TIPS (8477) or **TIPS from a cell phone.

You may also submit your tip via the internet at <http://www.hernandocountycrimestoppers.com> .

You will remain anonymous and also be eligible for a reward up to \$5,000 cash!