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### VIRGINIA STATE POLICE “C.A.R.E.” FOR COMMONWEALTH’S HIGHWAYS THIS MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

*Stepped Up Patrols Statewide and Click It or Ticket Enforcement Over the Holiday*

RICHMOND – Those traveling this holiday weekend can expect to see more Virginia State Police on the roadways statewide as part of the annual *Operation C.A.R.E.* traffic enforcement campaign. The *Operation Combined Accident Reduction Effort (C.A.R.E.)* is a state-sponsored, national program designed to reduce crashes, fatalities and injuries caused by speeding, impaired driving and failure to use occupant restraints. As a participating agency, State Police has increased visibility, checkpoints and traffic enforcement efforts throughout the Commonwealth beginning Friday morning, May 22, 2009, at 12:01 a.m. and continuing through midnight, Monday, May 25, 2009.

In addition to *Operation C.A.R.E.*, the Virginia State Police is also continuing its active participation in the nationwide *Click It or Ticket* educational and enforcement effort. The traffic safety project, which runs May 18-31, 2009, is aimed at increasing seatbelt use in Virginia and ultimately saving lives.



Last year during the holiday weekend, Virginia State Police troopers statewide cited 1,072 seatbelt violations. Another 348 summonses were issued for children not being properly secured in either a child safety seat or booster seat. Of the 18 people killed in traffic crashes during the 2008 Memorial Day weekend, 14 of them were not wearing safety belts.

“Memorial Day weekend traditionally signals the beginning of the summer travel season,” said Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, Virginia State Police Superintendent. “Make this a memorable and survivable holiday weekend and summer by simply obeying the rules of the road and always buckling up. Saving your life can truly be as simple as clicking a seatbelt every time you ride in a vehicle.”

The 2008 *Operation C.A.R.E.* initiative also resulted in 11,724 speeders and 2,579 reckless drivers being stopped, and 169 drunk drivers being taken off the road and arrested.

State police also investigated a total of 701 traffic crashes, with 15 of them being fatal and claiming the lives of 18 individuals. A total of 16 died in Virginia as a result of traffic crashes over the 2007 Memorial Day weekend and 11 people were killed during the 2006 holiday weekend.

With more troopers being out on Virginia’s roadways this holiday weekend, motorists are reminded of the statewide law requiring motorists to either move over a lane or slow down when passing an emergency vehicle on the side of a road. Violation of the law carries a punishment of up to a \$2,500 fine and/or 12 months in jail.



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#### STATEWIDE MEDIA CONTACTS:

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