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TAKE TIME & REITERATE SAFE DRIVING WITH YOUR TEEN THIS THANKSGIVING

Virginia Experiencing Surge in Fatal Teen Crashes September- November 2008

RICHMOND – Although the total number of fatal teen crashes is down compared to this time last year*, Virginia is experiencing a significant increase in deadly collisions involving young people within the past eight weeks. During September and October 2008, preliminary numbers indicate 23 teens were killed in traffic crashes. Already, within the first weeks of November, 12 teenagers have lost their lives in collisions across the state.

Of the 12 young people who died in November, eleven were males. Eight were not wearing a safety belt and seven crashes took place on rural routes. Alcohol was a factor in at least one collision. Teen drivers were involved in seven crashes and all the victims ranged from 16 to 20 years of age.

In September and October, there were 23 fatalities involving 13 males and 10 females including one pedestrian. Eight victims were not wearing a safety belt. Alcohol played a role in two collisions and possibly six others. Seven crashes involved teen drivers and seven occurred on rural routes.

"This is about more than just statistics or numbers; this is about 35 young people who won't be celebrating Thanksgiving with their families," says Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, Superintendent of Virginia State Police. "The freedom that comes with driving a car is the next step in a teen's independence, but handling a car on the road also comes with tremendous responsibility. Inexperience works against them on the road. Parents must continue to work with their teen drivers and help them make safe, responsible driving choices behind the wheel."

The October and November fatal crashes took place in the cities of Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach; as well as the counties of Amherst, Augusta, Bedford, Chesterfield, Fairfax, Fauquier, Gloucester, Henrico, Henry, King William, Lee, Loudoun, Nottoway, Rockingham and Russell.

Operation C.A.R.E Enforcement – Safer driving practices should be a focus for all drivers as they travel to and from their destinations during the busy Thanksgiving travel season. Last year, 19 people were killed in 18 fatal crashes on Virginia roads during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. The five-day statistical counting period included 160 DUI arrests, 918 safety belt violations and 223 child restraint citations by state police. In 2006, traffic crashes claimed 16 lives on Virginia's roads.

Once again, Virginia State Police will have additional troopers working on the interstates for the Thanksgiving holiday as part of the Operation Combined Accident Reduction Effort (Operation C.A.R.E.), which is a state sponsored, national program intended to decrease crashes, fatalities and injuries as a result of speeding, impaired driving and failure to use safety restraints. The traffic safety program is conducted during the year's national holidays.

This year's 120-hour Thanksgiving statistical counting period begins Wednesday, Nov. 26, and ends at midnight Sunday, Nov. 30, 2008.

With 75 percent of troopers working the roads during the holiday, the Department reminds all motorists about [Virginia's Move Over](#) law, which requires drivers to change to another travel lane or, when unable to, to slow down and cautiously pass all emergency personnel stopped on the side of a road.

**Preliminary report provided by DMV/Virginia Highway Safety Office as of Oct. 31, 2008*

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