



## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **UNHAPPY NEW YEAR FOR IMPAIRED DRIVERS: MORE THAN 3,300 ARRESTED IN DECEMBER DWI SWEEP**

ST. PAUL — Minnesota law enforcement officers arrested 3,354 impaired drivers during a December-long enforcement campaign. DWI offenders had an average alcohol-concentration of 0.17, over twice the legal limit of 0.08. Preliminary arrest totals were reported by 347 of more than 400 participating agencies. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) coordinated the effort.

Each year, alcohol-related crashes account for around 200 deaths and thousands of injuries. More than 500,000 Minnesotans — one in eight with a driver's record — has been arrested for DWI.

"Law enforcement alone cannot stop impaired driving behavior," says Cheri Marti, director of the state's Office of Traffic Safety. "As long as motorists continue to make irresponsible decisions, alcohol-related crashes will continue to account for one-third of the state's annual road deaths."

During the campaign, the Minnesota State Patrol issued 543 DWI arrests. Among Twin Cities' agencies, Minneapolis and St. Paul police departments led with 110 and 78 DWIs, respectively, followed by Bloomington P.D. (49), Eden Prairie P.D. (42) and Coon Rapids P.D. (38). In greater Minnesota, leaders were Wright County Sheriff's Office (52), Rochester P.D. (45), St. Cloud P.D. (43), and Sherburne County Sheriff's Office (41). Other notable agencies were the police departments of Austin (33), Duluth (28), Mankato (31), Roseville (31), White Bear Lake (29), and Winona (27). Anoka and Stearns county sheriff's offices both recorded 31 DWIs.

Depending on a variety of variables, a first-time DWI arrest can lead to a loss of license for 90 days. When factoring in increased insurance costs, legal and other fees, the expense of a DWI can cost up to nearly \$20,000.

Seat belt use, speeding and impaired driving enforcement campaigns are planned statewide this year in addition to ongoing NightCAP efforts — all components of the state's Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) initiative. TZD is a partnership led by the Minnesota departments of Public Safety, Transportation and Health, and county engineers to address traffic issues through education, enforcement, engineering and emergency trauma care response.

Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.

**Editor's Note:** *DWI arrests by agency are available upon request — email [Nathan.bowie@state.mn.us](mailto:Nathan.bowie@state.mn.us).*

Alcohol  
and Gambling  
Enforcement

ARMER/911  
Program

Bureau of Criminal  
Apprehension

Driver  
and Vehicle  
Services

Homeland Security  
and Emergency  
Management

Minnesota  
State Patrol

Office of  
Communications

Office of  
Justice Programs

Office of  
Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal  
and  
Pipeline Safety