



NEWS RELEASE

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FIRST 10 TRAFFIC DEATHS OF 2008: MAJORITY UNBELTED

ST. PAUL — Motorists not wearing seat belts represented at least six of the first 10 traffic deaths of 2008, according to State Patrol preliminary crash reports. Of those unbelted, four were ejected from their vehicle.

“A seat belt is your primary defense in case of a crash when traveling in a vehicle,” says Lt. Mark Peterson of the State Patrol. “If you ride unbelted, your chances of surviving a crash are cut in half.”

Each year in Minnesota, unbelted motorists account for around 200 traffic deaths. During 2004–2006, there were 658 unbelted vehicle occupant deaths.

The following January crashes involved unbelted vehicle occupant fatalities.

Jan. 4 at 6 p.m. on I-90 in Nobles County: Ryan Guidice, 29, of Billings, Mont., drove into the median and hit a barrier. His vehicle rolled and Guidice was ejected and killed.

Jan. 5 around 1 a.m. on Hwy. 60 near Heron Lake: Jose Garcia, 25, of St. James, lost control of his vehicle, went into the median and rolled. He was ejected and killed.

Jan. 15 at 11:45 p.m. on I-35E in Anoka County: Michael Bobbitt, 44, of Roseville, ran off the road, then over-corrected causing his vehicle to roll over. Bobbitt was ejected and killed — pinned under his pickup truck’s cab.

Jan. 17 at 1 p.m. on 32nd Ave. in Crystal: Terry Christian, 21, of Brooklyn Park, rear-ended a City of Crystal maintenance truck. Christian was not wearing a seat belt and was killed.

Jan. 21 around 11:30 a.m. on Hwy. 169 and Medicine Lake Rd. in Hennepin County: Sally Hansen, 39, of Crystal, lost control of her vehicle, went off the road and rolled. Hansen was ejected and killed.

Jan. 21 at 1:20 p.m. on I-90 in Olmsted County: a vehicle driven by Duane Johnson, 75, of Aberdeen, SD, was hit by a semitrailer; Johnson was killed.

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