



NEWS RELEASE

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PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES 2006 *IMPAIRED DRIVING FACTS* REPORT

Report Provides DWI Arrests, Conviction Rates and Fatalities by County

ST. PAUL — A detailed summary of impaired driving in Minnesota reports 4,688 alcohol-related crashes in 2006 resulted in 166 deaths, 3,500 injuries and an estimated economic impact of \$277 million. A record-high number of motorists — 41,951 — were arrested for impaired driving in 2006, translating to 115 DWI arrests a day. The report, *Minnesota Motor Vehicle Impaired Driving Facts 2006*, is compiled annually by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (OTS).

Nationally, alcohol-related deaths were almost unchanged from 2005 to 2006: 17,590 in 2005 and 17,602 in 2006. Minnesota alcohol-related deaths decreased by nearly 16 percent from 197 in 2005 to 166 in 2006. While the alcohol-related death count is the lowest on record, impaired driving still accounted for one in three traffic deaths.

For the five-year period 2002–2006, Minnesota averaged 207 alcohol-related traffic deaths and 35,717 impaired driving arrests annually. In 2006, males accounted for 76 percent of all DWIs and motorists ages 20–29 represented nearly half of the arrests. One in 10 of the DWI arrests were motorists under age 21. Over 60 percent of violators were first-time offenders, yet almost 16,000 (38 percent) had two or more DWIs on record. The average alcohol concentration among first-time offenders was 0.14.

In all, one in eight licensed Minnesota drivers — more than one-half million — has a DWI on record. OTS reports that about 41 percent of those who incur one violation will incur a second DWI; one in 19 Minnesotans with a driving record have two or more DWIs.

The report shows that 82 percent of impaired driving incidents on record included a criminal conviction for driving while impaired by alcohol. Nearly half of the DWI arrests were made on Saturdays and Sundays. The Twin Cities' metro area and the 80-county greater Minnesota each accounted for about one-half of all 2006 DWI arrests. Yet two-thirds of alcohol-related traffic deaths occurred outside the Twin Cities' metro — Greater Minnesota accounted for 353 total traffic deaths, of which 117 (33 percent) were impaired driving-related.

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Editor's Note: *Impaired Driving Facts* is online — www.dps.state.mn.us/OTS/crashdata/impaired_driving.asp

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