



# NEWS RELEASE

Christine M. Krueger, Director of Communications

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 17, 2008

**CONTACT:**

Nathan Bowie, 651-201-7571

## **HIGH-SPEED DOUBLE-FATAL CRASH SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON UNBELTED NIGHTTIME TRAFFIC DEATHS**

*66 Percent of Motorists Killed During Nighttime Hours Unbelted*

Alcohol  
and Gambling  
Enforcement

Bureau of  
Criminal  
Apprehension

Driver  
and Vehicle  
Services

Emergency  
Communication  
Networks

Homeland  
Security and  
Emergency  
Management

Minnesota  
State Patrol

Office of  
Communications

Office of  
Justice Programs

Office of  
Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal

ST. PAUL — A high-speed roll-over traffic crash around midnight Thursday that killed two motorists — both unbelted and ejected — highlights a trend on Minnesota roads that concerns traffic safety officials: unbelted nighttime traffic deaths.

According to the preliminary State Patrol report, a 2006 Honda Civic was traveling eastbound on I-94 at a high rate of speed and exited at Hiawatha when it lost control and rolled several times. Two motorists were ejected and killed. Two other passengers were belted and suffered minor injuries.

Alcohol use is unknown at this time. The crash remains under investigation by the State Patrol and no further details are available at this time.

Department of Public Safety (DPS) 2004–2006 data reports there were 306 vehicle occupant traffic deaths during nighttime hours (9 p.m. – 3 a.m.) and 202 — 66 percent — were not belted. Of the 202 nighttime unbelted deaths, 148 — 73 percent — were alcohol-related.

“The reality is there is a spike in risk-taking behavior at night on our roads, such as impaired driving and high speeds,” says Cheri Marti, director of the DPS Office of Traffic Safety. “When motorists engage in these unsafe driving acts and they aren’t belted, chances for surviving a crash become even less likely.”

Marti says a seat belt is a motorist’s best defense in case of a crash and that chances of surviving a crash are cut in half when a belt is not used.

For crash information updates, visit the State Patrol crash report website at

<https://www.dps.state.mn.us/patrol/media/index.asp>.

###