



NEWS RELEASE

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MINNESOTA COPS MOBILIZE FOR *CLICK IT OR TICKET* SEAT BELT ENFORCEMENT

Counties with Highest Percentage of Unbelted Deaths Mapped

Alcohol
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Driver
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Services

Emergency
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Networks

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Minnesota
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Office of
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Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal

ST. PAUL — Minnesota law enforcement will enhance seat belt patrols during a 10-day *Click It or Ticket* enforcement sweep, Oct. 10–19. In the last three years more than half — 612 — of 1,212 total vehicle occupants killed during 2005–2007 were not belted. Another 1,298 unbelted motorists were seriously injured in crashes. To-date in 2008, of the preliminary 209 vehicle occupants killed in crashes 128 — 61 percent — were not belted.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) is coordinating the effort that includes around 400 law enforcement agencies. Seat belt citations are \$25 but can cost up to \$115 with administrative fees. A similar May 2008 seat belt enforcement campaign generated 8,202 seat belt and 180 child seat citations.

The enforcement effort will emphasize special nighttime seat belt patrols. DPS 2005–2007 data reports there were 296 vehicle occupant traffic deaths during nighttime hours (9 p.m. – 3 a.m.) and 184 of the traffic crash victims — 62 percent — were not belted.

“Enforcing seat belt use is step-one in limiting preventable traffic deaths,” says Col. Mark Dunaski, chief of the Minnesota State Patrol. “When you have a chance to save a life, it’s absolutely necessary to act on it.”

DPS 2005–2007 data identifies specific counties with a high percentage of unbelted fatalities. In the metro, 62 percent (26) of Ramsey County’s 42 vehicle occupant traffic deaths were unbelted, and 50 percent of Anoka County’s 46 deaths were not buckled up. By contrast, in Hennepin County, 90 motorists were killed and only 37 percent were not belted. In Greater Minnesota, these counties — seven in southwest Minnesota — had high percentages of belt non-use fatalities: Cass (11 of 15 deaths — 73 percent); Clay (11 of 17 deaths — 65 percent); Freeborn (eight of nine deaths — 89 percent); Faribault and Jackson (both with six of eight deaths — 75 percent); Itasca (10 of 15 deaths — 67 percent); Kanabec (nine of 11 deaths — 82 percent); Kandiyohi (13 of 18 deaths — 72 percent); Nicollet (seven of 10 deaths — 70 percent); Redwood (seven of nine deaths — 77 percent); and Renville (11 of 14 deaths — 79 percent). The motorists killed in Grant (two) Houston (two), Lac Qui Parle (three) and Red Lake (four) counties were all not buckled up.

Buckle Up. Click It or Ticket.

Editor’s Note: County-by-county seat belt fact sheets are available upon request email Nathan.bowie@state.mn.us.