



NEWS RELEASE

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MINNESOTA ROAD DEATHS HIT 100-MARK FOR 2009 *State Patrol Reports Eight Killed in April — Five Not Buckled Up*

ST. PAUL — More than 100 people have been killed on Minnesota roads in 2009, according to preliminary Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) data. Minnesota’s year-to-date traffic fatalities stands at 104 following eight motorist traffic deaths in April, five of which were not wearing seat belts. According to State Patrol preliminary crash reports, another four unbelted motorists were seriously injured in April — all were ejected from their vehicles.

At this rate, DPS projects around 440 deaths for the year, or an average of 37 traffic fatalities per month. In 2008, the state reached the 100-death milestone on April 23. The preliminary 2008 total fatality count is 456, with a final number expected later this month.

“These fatal crashes involving unbelted motorists serve as a wake-up call to the 700,000-plus Minnesotans who don’t wear seat belts,” says Cheri Marti, director of the DPS Office of Traffic Safety. “Whatever your excuse is for not buckling up, these crashes demonstrate an excuse won’t help you when you’re involved in a crash.”

Traffic deaths to-date for 2009 include six pedestrians and three motorcyclists. Officials note these deaths are a reminder for motorists to be prepared for and anticipate those on two wheels or on feet — especially as the state heads into warmer weather months and bicycle, motorcycle and pedestrian traffic increases.

Marti says to continue to drive Minnesota traffic deaths toward zero, motorists need to buckle up, pay attention, drive at safe speeds and always plan for a sober ride to avoid driving impaired.

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