



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EXTRA DWI ENFORCEMENT DECLARED FOR THE 4TH

2008: 5 of 8 Traffic Deaths were Alcohol-Related

ST. PAUL — Following one of the deadliest Memorial Day holiday weekends ever, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) is reinforcing the need for motorists to drive belted, safe and sober during the Independence Day weekend. Last year alcohol-related crashes accounted for five of the eight motorists killed surrounding the holiday. Another 1,819 motorists were arrested for DWI.

To combat impaired driving, Operation NightCAP (nighttime concentrated alcohol patrol) enhanced DWI enforcement efforts will be conducted during the 4th of July weekend. DWI patrols will ramp up in Anoka, Blue Earth, Crow Wing, Dakota, Hennepin, Itasca, Ramsey, Rice, St. Louis, Sherburne, Stearns, Washington and Wright counties.

In June, NightCAP enforcement campaigns resulted in 2,862 vehicle stops, 183 DWI arrests and 138 seat belt citations. At mid-year, the state has recorded 183 deaths, compared to 188 at this time last year.

“Unfortunately, every holiday weekend has the potential to be a tragic one on Minnesota roads,” says State Patrol Lt. Matt Langer. “Understanding the importance of driving safe, smart and sober is the simple answer to stopping these preventable deaths and injuries.”

DPS reminds motorists to follow these safe driving tips:

- Buckle up — Seat belts are the best defense in case of a crash and on roads plagued with speeding, distracted and impaired drivers. The state’s primary seat belt law is in effect, meaning every driver and all passengers — even in the back — must be belted. Law enforcement can stop a vehicle if anyone in a vehicle is not belted.
- Pay attention — Stay focused on driving, especially as more vehicles will be on the road. Delegate control of music, air conditioning and phones to passengers.
- Drive at safe speeds — Determine enough travel time in advance to avoid the urge to speed.
- Use a designated driver — If you plan on drinking, plan on a safe and sober ride.
- Drive well-rested — Use rest-stops, rotate drivers and be patient.
- Fireworks, legal or illegal, transported in a vehicle are potentially hazardous in the case of a crash or if accidentally ignited.
- Move over for emergency responders and reduce speeds in work zones.

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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