



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 15, 2010

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A HEAVY FOOT AND AGGRESSIVE DRIVING WILL MEAN A LIGHTER WALLET WITH ADDED SPEED PATROLS IN 2010

Speeding Enforcement Supported by New Ad Campaign

ST. PAUL — Minnesota law enforcement agencies are accelerating patrols in 2010 to combat one of state's leading contributors to fatal traffic crashes — speeding. Around 50 agencies will conduct extra enforcement to address speeding, and an ad campaign will remind drivers that the posted speed is the speed limit. The effort is a combined project of the Minnesota Departments of Public Safety (DPS) and Transportation (MnDOT).

During 2006–2008 in Minnesota, illegal/unsafe speed was a contributing factor in 391 traffic deaths. A majority of the speed-related fatal crashes (68 percent) occur on rural areas (less than 5,000 population).

“Every day on every road motorists are ignoring speed limits, and as a result, put lives at risk,” says Col. Mark Dunaski, chief of the Minnesota State Patrol. “No matter how many motorists speed, it doesn't make it legal or safe. Speed limits are posted for a reason— to reflect the safe speed for the road's design.”

DPS cites the dangers of speeding include greater potential for loss of vehicle control; increased stopping distance; less time available for driver response for crash avoidance; and increased crash severity leading to more numerous and severe injuries.

MnDOT used crash data to identify corridors at which speed and aggressive traffic fatalities were prevalent. These roads will see added patrols year-long. Throughout the campaign, MnDOT will monitor travel speeds on select roadways to identify changes in travel speeds before, during and after heightened enforcement periods.

The 2010 speed enforcement effort is supported by \$1.5 million in federal funding, translating to more than 20,000 hours of additional patrols. The State Patrol is partnering with county and city agencies to target specific roadways statewide that have a history of speeding activity. The enhanced enforcement will occur throughout the year.

Costs of speeding violations vary by county, but typically ramp up to at least \$120 for traveling 10 mph over the limit. Motorists stopped at 20 mph over the speed limit face double the fine, and those ticketed traveling more than 100 mph can lose their license for six months.

The enforcement will include a focus on aggressive driving behavior, such as tailgating, abrupt lane changes and red-light running. Cheri Marti, DPS Office of Traffic Safety director, says patience and a shift of driving attitudes is necessary to prevent crashes associated with speeding.

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“Speeding and aggressive driving often stems from the motorist’s mindset that the road belongs to them only, and everyone else is in their way,” says Marti. “Drivers need to realistically anticipate travel times and allow the time necessary to arrive to your destination safely and on time. The minimal time gained while speeding could have life-long consequences.”

Marti adds that motorists keep at least a three-second following distance, noting it takes more than the length of a football field to stop when traveling at 60 miles per hour. She stresses that motorists plan in advance for trips to avoid the urge to speed. DPS reports that a motorist traveling at 65 miles per hour compared to 55 mph will save only 1 minute and 41 seconds on a 10 mile trip.

“MnDOT supports the enforcement of the posted speed limit as speed plays a critical role in fatal and serious injury crashes,” says Sue Groth, MnDOT director of the Office of Traffic, Safety and Technology. “With limited resources we use our data to strategically deploy enforcement personnel where they can make the biggest impact.”

A federally funded paid advertising campaign, administrated by DPS, will support the additional enforcement efforts. The campaign includes TV, radio, print and out-of-home (gas pumptoppers, restrooms, etc.) advertisements. To view the TV spot, hear the radio ads and view print ads, visit DPS Office of Traffic Safety at

http://www.dps.state.mn.us/ots/resource_catalog/newspapers_radio_tv_psa.asp.

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