



## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **DWI PATROLS ARE COMING TO TOWN**

*Extra Statewide Enforcement During December*

ST. PAUL — If Minnesota motorists drive impaired in December, they will likely have themselves a merry little time in jail. Around 400 city and county law enforcement agencies will partner with the Minnesota State Patrol to conduct a statewide DWI enforcement crackdown throughout the month of December.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) Office of Traffic Safety is coordinating the campaign supported by \$350,000 in federal funds — translating to 7,000 extra hours of enforcement.

[A similar campaign in December 2009 resulted in nearly 2,600 DWI arrests.](#)

The enforcement effort is aimed to address a potentially deadly period on the roads during the holiday celebration season. In Minnesota during the month of December, 2007–2009, alcohol-related crashes accounted for 34 traffic deaths. During this same period, 8,503 motorists were arrested for DWI.

“We want to keep Minnesota friends and families safe during the holidays, and that’s why these extra patrols will be on the road,” says Col. Mark Dunaski, chief of the Minnesota State Patrol. “Put a designated driver on your holiday wish-list to avoid the harsh consequences of a DWI.”

Dunaski says now is the time to plan for a safe and sober ride and to continue that habit in the New Year. He notes that in addition to designated drivers and using a cab, families should let each other know that they will be available to offer a safe ride home.

In Minnesota, one in seven drivers has a DWI on record, and each year more than 30,000 motorists are arrested for DWI. Consequences for a DWI include loss of license for up to a year, up to \$20,000 in legal costs and heightened insurance rates, and possible jail time.

Each year, alcohol-related crashes account for more than 140 traffic deaths and nearly 400 serious injuries. These crashes and fatalities have been declining in recent years, and DPS officials say enhanced DWI enforcement campaigns have been a major factor in Minnesota’s continuing trend of lower alcohol-related traffic deaths.

—MORE—

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[In 2009 there were 141 deaths — a record low.](#) Despite the drop in alcohol-related deaths, drinking and driving crashes still account for more than one-third of all traffic deaths annually.

Law enforcement agencies will combine the enhanced DWI patrols with seat belt enforcement; each year 75 percent of drinking drivers killed in crashes are also not belted. Minnesota's primary seat belt law requires drivers and passengers in all seating positions, including the back seat, to be buckled up or in the correct child restraint. Law enforcement will stop and ticket unbelted motorists or passengers.

The December DWI enforcement is a component of the state's core traffic safety initiative, [Toward Zero Deaths \(TZD\)](#). TZD focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes — education, enforcement, engineering and emergency trauma response. The goal of the program is 400 or fewer deaths by the end of 2010. To-date, there have been 376 traffic deaths in Minnesota compared to 368 at this time in 2009.



**Editor's note:**

Download the below items from this website —  
<https://mndeptpublicsafety.sharefile.com/d/s972e30c19e94bbc9>, or find them in links here:

- [County-by-county facts — DWI arrests and alcohol-related deaths.](#)
- [State map that plots locations of alcohol-related deaths.](#)
- [Creative materials \(TV, radio, print\).](#)

Download video clips/soundbites from today's news conference in St. Paul here:  
<https://mndeptpublicsafety.sharefile.com/d/sd96eb96185041699>.

The fact sheets can also be viewed online at [www.dps.state.mn.us/ots](http://www.dps.state.mn.us/ots), click on the "Crash Data and Reports" tab at the top of the page and then find the "Impaired Driving Facts" header under the "New Fact Sheets" section in the center of the page. Direct link:  
<http://www.dps.state.mn.us/OTS/crashdata/default.asp>.