



NEWS RELEASE

Doug Neville, Director of Communications

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CONTACT:

Nathan Bowie, 651-201-7571

SPEEDING DRIVERS ON THE RADAR FOR JULY ENFORCEMENT

Data Reveals Enforcement Is Decreasing Speeds on Targeted Roads

ST. PAUL — To counter the trend of motorists increasing speeds during summer, Minnesota law enforcement agencies are stepping up speed patrols in July. The added speed enforcement is coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS), which reports illegal and unsafe speeding as factors in around 130 deaths annually — about 70 percent of which occur in rural areas.

The statewide July effort includes around 400 agencies and supplements an ongoing, 12-month speeding enforcement campaign that has resulted in 22,192 vehicle stops since launching in October 2009. Reports from that campaign indicate males drivers ages 21–34 are the biggest offenders, accounting for 22 percent of stops.

The speed patrols include a focus on aggressive driving behavior, such as tailgating, abrupt lane changes and red light running. 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.

“It’s no secret that many drivers exceed the speed limit, often to dangerous extremes,” says Lt. Eric Roeske of the State Patrol. “Now is the time to think twice about putting yourself at risk, and at greater risk of a ticket.”

DPS reports 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. Motorists should keep at least a three-second following distance, as it takes more than the length of a football field to stop when traveling at 60 miles per hour.

MnDOT recorded travel speed data on select roadways during Oct. 2008–March 2009 — prior to the enforcement — as well as during the same period a year later with speed patrols in effect. Their preliminary data show the percentage of motorists driving 10 mph over the limit decreased from 13 percent during the non-enforcement period to 11 percent during increased patrols — considered a significant drop based on volume of traffic. Overall, there are now 61,292 fewer vehicles driving 10 mph above the posted speed limit compared to the non-enforcement measuring period.

Among the measured corridors that recorded fewer speeders traveling 10 mph over the limit since enforcement began are:

- I-35 (Chisago County) — 7.21 percent reduction.
- U.S. Hwy. 2 (Polk County) — 26.6 percent reduction.
- U.S. Hwy. 14 (St. Louis County) — 1.47 percent reduction.
- U.S. Hwy. 169 (Scott County) — 0.07 percent reduction.
- Minnesota Hwy. 36 (Washington County) — 1 percent reduction.
- Minnesota Hwy. 60 (Watonwan County) — 4.5 percent reduction.

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Increases in speeds were reported on Hwy. 53 (St. Louis County) — 0.65 percent increase; and I-35W (Anoka County) — 3.12 percent increase.

“Monitoring vehicle speeds through engineering practices is important to determine the effectiveness of these enforcement campaigns,” says Sue Groth, MnDOT Director of the Office of Traffic, Safety and Technology. “Motorists need to understand that speed limits are posted for a reason — to reflect the maximum safe speed for the road’s design.”

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.

Both the July and year-long speed campaigns are supported by federal funding and will be supported by a paid advertising campaign, conducted by DPS. 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.

The speed campaign is a component of the state’s core traffic safety initiative, *Toward Zero Deaths. 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. *TZD* is a partnership led by the departments of Public Safety, Transportation and Health, in cooperation with state and local law enforcement, Minnesota County Engineers Association, and the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota. *TZD* encourages traffic safety community stakeholders to partner with the state to tailor solutions specific to their local traffic safety needs.

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Editor’s Note: Download new speed ad campaign elements (TV, print and radio spots); audio/video clip statements from State Patrol Capt. Matt Langer; and speed deaths and injuries by Minnesota county fact sheet at: <https://mndeptpublicsafety.sharefile.com/d/se473411bb7943b29>