



## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **CLICK IT OR TICKET EXTRA ENFORCEMENT: BUCKLE UP EVERY SEAT, EVERY TIME**

ST. PAUL – Forgetting to set an alarm clock just one time can cause a person to be late to work or school. Forgetting to buckle up just one time may prevent a person from ever getting to work or school.

To remind motorists that seat belts save lives, more than 300 law enforcement agencies across the state will be participating in the statewide Click It or Ticket campaign Oct. 14 – Oct. 30. The extra enforcement and education effort is coordinated by the Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety.

“Whether it’s unbuckling to reach down for something or not buckling because you are just a few blocks away from your destination, it only takes one time for tragedy to strike,” said Donna Berger, Office of Traffic Safety director. “You significantly increase your chances of surviving a crash if you buckle up every time you get in the vehicle.”

#### **Not Buckling Up is a Dangerous Decision**

Good people make bad choices on the road every day and not wearing a seat belt can prove tragic.

- In 2015, 91 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads.
- In a five year period (2011 – 2015), 38 percent of the 1,379 people killed while riding in motor vehicles were not wearing seat belts.
- In 2015, 77 percent of vehicle occupants who were ejected or partially ejected and died were not wearing a seat belt.
- In Minnesota in 2015, seat belts saved an estimated 227 people ages 5 and older. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

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**Join the Crowd**

Most Minnesotans are buckling up and their choices are life-saving and helping decrease life-changing consequences. The 2016 Minnesota Observational Seat Belt Survey results show:

- A 93 percent compliance for front seat occupants.
- Males continue to buckle up at a lower rate (90 percent) compared with females (96.5 percent).
- Pickup drivers have the lowest seat belt use.
  - Passenger vehicle: 95.2 percent
  - SUV: 95.2 percent
  - Van/Minivan: 92.8 percent
  - Pickup truck 83.6 percent

Statewide seat belt use by percent

2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
93.2	94	94.7	94.8	93.6	92.7	92.3	90.2

**Speak Up about Buckling Up**

Drivers should not start the engine until every passenger in the car is belted. If a passenger sees the driver unbelted, they should speak up and make sure the driver’s seat belt is secure.

**Every Seat, Every Time**

Minnesota law requires all motorists to buckle up or be seated in the correct child restraint. Officers will stop and ticket unbelted drivers or passengers. Seat belts must be worn correctly — low and snug across the hips or thighs, and shoulder straps should never be tucked under an arm or behind the back.

“Our hope is that one day we no longer find a motorist who chooses to not wear their seat belt,” said Lt. Heath Dienger, Minnesota State Patrol. “Until that day comes, we will continue to aggressively stop those who are not belted to encourage them to comply with the law for their safety.”

**Minnesota Child Car Seat Law and Steps**

- In Minnesota, all children must be in a child restraint until they are 4’9” tall, or at least age 8, whichever comes first.
- Rear-facing child seats - Newborns to at least 1 year and 20 pounds; recommended up to age 2. It is safest to keep a child rear-facing as long as possible.
- Forward-facing seats - Age 2 until around age 4. It's preferable to keep children in a harnessed restraint until they reach the maximum weight limit.
- Booster seats - Use after outgrowing a forward-facing harnessed restraint; safest to remain in a booster until 4 feet 9 inches tall, or at least age 8, whichever comes first.
- Seat belts - Use when children can sit with their back against the vehicle seat and have their knees bent comfortably over the edge with their feet touching the floor.

**About the Minnesota Department Public Safety**

DPS comprises 11 divisions where 2,100 employees operate programs in the areas of law enforcement, crime victim assistance, traffic safety, alcohol and gambling, emergency communications, fire safety, pipeline safety, driver licensing, vehicle registration and emergency management. DPS activity is anchored by three core principles: education, enforcement and prevention.

**About the Office of Traffic Safety**

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (DPS-OTS) designs, implements and coordinates federally funded traffic safety enforcement and education programs to improve driver behaviors and reduce the deaths and serious injuries that occur on Minnesota roads. DPS-OTS also administers state funds for the motorcycle safety program and for the child seats for needy families program.

DPS-OTS is an anchoring partner of the state's [Toward Zero Deaths \(TZD\)](#) traffic safety program. A primary vision of the TZD program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. TZD focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes – education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma response.

### **Recent DPS-OTS Activity and Statistics**

- Law enforcement statewide made 1,351 DWI arrests during the summer extra enforcement period Aug. 19 – Sept. 5.
- Minnesota [Motor Vehicle Crash Facts 2015](#) is a summary of traffic crashes derived from law enforcement reports and describes how, why and where crashes occurred and who was involved.
- The [2015 Minnesota Motor Vehicle Impaired Driving Facts](#) report highlights impaired driving data in areas such as fatalities, DWIs, repeat offenders and alcohol-related crash statistics.

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