

## National Passenger Safety Week

All this week (January 21-27, 2024), passengers are empowered to speak up when their lives or those of others are in danger from reckless drivers. But, every day should be a day when we as passengers and bystanders have the courage to intervene.

At some point in our lives, we've all had the uneasy feeling of being a passenger and just not being comfortable with how the person behind the wheel is driving or conducting themselves. Maybe the driver has had too much to drink, or they're going too fast, or they're distracted, talking on the cell phone and not paying attention to the road.

Or perhaps we've seen friends or family head to the car to go somewhere, and you know deep inside that they're really in no shape to drive safely, that they're in danger of harming or killing themselves and others. Still, it can be hard sometimes to speak up, to know when and how to intervene. That takes courage and guts, especially in a social setting when others are watching, and you don't know how the person you might be confronting is going to react.

### But silence doesn't save lives.

Drunk, drugged, and distracted driving is on the rise. Did you know that in 2019, [62 percent](#) of all traffic fatalities are passengers? That 13 percent of those who died in alcohol-related fatalities were passengers? And that 53 percent of children killed in alcohol-related crashes were passengers?

Thousands of people know this pain as the friends and family of loved ones who died as passengers in completely preventable crashes. Many of them were teenagers who hopped in the car with impaired friends driving or with multiple passengers, violating legal driving restrictions meant to help keep teens safe. Sometimes in the tragic aftermath, stories emerge of friends and parents being concerned but not taking action: *I tried to stop him, but he wouldn't listen. I didn't know what could happen. If only I had said something when she took that call...*

But silence doesn't save lives.

**You have the right to intervene  
if you don't feel safe.**

**Passengers have the right to  
get to their destination safely.**

## What to Do in an Emergency

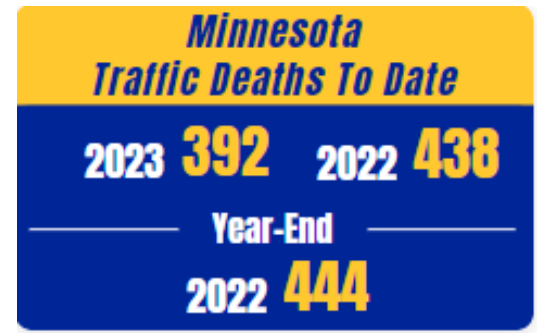
If you are stopped or stalled in wintry weather, stay focused on yourself and your passengers, your car, and your surroundings.

- **Stay with your car and in your car** and don't overexert yourself.
- Let your car be seen. Put bright markers on the antenna or windows and keep the interior dome light on.
- Be mindful of carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure your exhaust pipe is clear of any snow and run your car only sporadically— just long enough to stay warm. Don't run your car for long periods of time with the windows up or in an enclosed space.



## Enforcement Update:

- DWI (optional): Feb 11-12, 2024—Super Bowl
- DWI (optional): Mar 14-17, 2024—St. Patrick's Day celebrations
- Distracted; April 1-30, 2024
- Speed: May 1-Sept 2, 2024 (covers 100 deadliest days)



## Mental Health and Traffic Safety

Can everyday traffic affect your mental health? Absolutely!



Traffic congestions and noise can cause stress, fatigue, irritability, and rage in commuters.

Loud honking, road rage and over speeding can affect the person themselves and other commuters as well. And one of the biggest consequences of this is stress. Stress is a very broad term with multiple dimensions.

At a psychological level, it can cause anxiety, lack of control, work frustration, or problems in the way we respond or react .

At a cognitive level, the sense of a lack of control, a feeling of helplessness and poor tolerance for frustration lowers one's response inhibitive ability and one does whatever comes to their mind at that moment.

At a physical level, one may experience high blood pressure, and a feeling of being on edge., a heightened activity in the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS, the part of the brain that's responsible for controlling bodily functions which are not consciously directed, like breathing, heartbeat and digestion), and changes in body temperature. In the long run, the immune system's ability to withstand pressure reduces, especially when the activity in the ANS is high.

At a social level, there could be a possibility of not going to office, or taking a day off in order to avoid traffic stress. Possible effects can include people opting for a job change due to the stress and fatigue caused by the daily commute. Some people may also feel a lack of motivation to meet friends and extended family.

Along with traffic, factors such as: conflicts at home/work/elsewhere which are carried onto the road, quarrels that occur on the road, and rash behavior because of traffic congestion can also affect your mental health and the way that you drive or react behind the wheel of a car.

To counter this, forming good sleep habits to get the rest your body needs, taking short naps during the day, drinking plenty of fluids, eating right, exercising regularly, and balancing time between work and family life can help you overcome fatigue. **How you feel will affect how you drive. Be safe!**

## Mark you Calendars!

- April 3, 2024—Tribal Summit—Grand Casino -Hinkley, MN
- April 10, 2024—Teen TZD Conference—Evangelical Free Church in TRF
- April 23, 2024—NW Regional TZD Conference—Legacy Center in TRF

Toward Zero Deaths Northwest Regional Newsletter

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## 10 ways to lift your spirits

- 1 count your Blessings
- 2 think **POSITIVELY**
- 3 relax & **BREATHE** .....
- 4 **appreciate someone**
- 5 look at the bigger picture
- 6 **create something**
- 7 take a step towards a goal
- 8 have some **fun**
- 9 **LOVE** this very moment
- 10 **SMILE!** [www.lyndafield.com](http://www.lyndafield.com)