

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **For Release Immediately**

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## **For Further Information Contact**

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## **FAILING TO BUCKLE UP IS LIKE RIDING A ROLLERCOASTER WITHOUT PROTECTION**

*Click It or Ticket: Extra Enforcement in Steele County May 21 – June 3*

Owatonna, Steele County, Minnesota – Imagine hopping on a rollercoaster, speeding at 70 mph and going upside down. Now close your eyes and imagine riding that same rollercoaster unbelted. It only takes a split second to realize the tragic consequences of an unbelted rollercoaster rider. If you wouldn't ride a rollercoaster without a seat belt, why would you ride in a car without one? The two seconds it takes to buckle up in a vehicle can save your life if you are ever involved in a crash.

To continue educating motorists that seat belts save lives and it's the law to buckle up, more than 300 law enforcement agencies across the state will be participating in the statewide Click It or Ticket campaign May 21 – June 3. The Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety coordinates the extra enforcement and education campaign.

### **The Good News and Bad News**

Fortunately, most Minnesotans are making the life-saving decision to buckle up.

- According to the 2017 Minnesota Seat Belt Survey, 92 percent of front seat occupants are wearing their seat belts.
- Severe injuries are also going down. In 1987, there were 4,176 vehicle occupants who suffered severe injuries in traffic crashes. That number dropped to 1,317 in 2016.

For those choosing not to buckle up, the results are tragically hurting families across Minnesota.

- In 2016, 79 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads.

*Owatonna Police Department - Exceeding Expectations!*

- In 2016, 76 percent of the unbelted deaths occurred in Greater Minnesota (outside the seven-county metro area).
- In 2016, 30 percent of motor vehicle deaths were unbelted.

### **Speak Up about Buckling Up**

An unbelted motorist can crash into a windshield and get thrown into other passengers. Often times, an unbelted occupant is ejected from the vehicle and killed.

Drivers are in charge of their vehicles and of the safety of their passengers. They can refuse to start the car until every passenger is belted. Passengers also can speak up if the driver is endangering everyone in the vehicle by not buckling up.

### **The Law is for Safety**

Minnesota law states that drivers and passengers in all seating positions must be buckled up or 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, and shoulder straps should never be tucked under an arm or behind the back.

### **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 seats - All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car seat until they have reached the height and weight limits allowed by the car seat manufacturer. It is safest to keep children rear-facing up to the maximum weight limit of the car seat.
- Forward-facing seats with harness - Toddlers and preschoolers who have reached the height and weight limits of the rear-facing car seat should use a forward-facing seat with harness until they reach the weight limit of the harness allowed by the car seat manufacturer.
- Booster seats - For school-age children who have reached the height and weight limits of the forward-facing seat. The booster must be used with a lap and shoulder belt.
- Seat belts - For children over 8 years old or have reached 4 feet 9 inches. Your child is ready for an adult seat belt when they can sit with their back against the vehicle seat, knees bent comfortably and completely over the vehicle seat edge without slouching, and feet touching the floor.

### **Border to Border Extra Seat Belt Enforcement**

- Across the country, law enforcement agencies will team up for increased seat belt enforcement and awareness to reduce traffic fatalities and save lives.
- The event will run between 4 and 8 p.m. on May 21.
- The operation will include both interstates and local roadways.

### **Toward Zero Deaths**

The Click It or Ticket seat belt enforcement and education is a component of the state's Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) 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, emergency medical and trauma response and everyone**

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