

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**For Release Immediately**

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## **DRIVE SMART: SLOW DOWN, OBEY THE SPEED LIMIT**

*Extra Speed Enforcement June 22-July 19*

ST. PAUL – With reduced traffic the last several months, it would seem the risk on Minnesota roads would be reduced. Unfortunately, many drivers have chosen to use the open roads as a license to speed.

To help put the brakes on speed-related deaths and educate motorists, officers, deputies and troopers will work overtime shifts June 22 through July 19. Law enforcement agencies across the state will participate in the campaign coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (DPS-OTS).

### **Speeding Incidents on the Rise**

Excessive speeding over recent months is troubling and requires Minnesotans to commit to slowing down this summer.

- From April 1 – May 21, the Minnesota State Patrol pulled over 232 drivers traveling more than 100 mph. That's compared to 93 drivers during the same time period last year, a 149 percent increase. Of the 232 drivers, 179 were 30-years-old or younger.
- Overall fatal crashes and fatalities from March 16 - May 31 increased over last year despite reduced traffic.
- While a crash can have more than one contributing factor, speed was the most frequently cited factor.

All fatal crashes and fatalities for March 16-May 31:

- 2020: 61 (67 deaths)
- 2019: 52 (55 deaths)
- 2018: 65 (71 deaths)
- 2017: 62 (65 deaths)
- 2016: 66 (70 deaths)
- 2015: 81 (85 deaths)

Preliminary reports show speed has already contributed to 36 motorists dying on Minnesota roads in 2020, compared with 27 at this time last year.

### Speed-Related Traffic Fatalities

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
86	85	74	76	94	78	89	88	113	75

Long-term trends are also discouraging. When comparing preliminary numbers for the five-year periods of 2010 - 2014 to 2015 - 2019:

- There has been a 7 percent increase in speed-related fatalities.
- In 2010-2014, 22 percent of all serious injuries were speed-related. In 2015-2019, it was 27 percent.

“The open roads due to reduced traffic doesn’t give anyone a license to speed,” said Mike Hanson, OTS director. “Fewer vehicles on the road doesn’t mean less danger. And now with more vehicles on the road, going the speed limit and slowing down are critical to us all coming home to our loved ones at the end of the day.”

### Summer and Speed – Make the Safe Choice

Drivers who think speeding is not a big deal risk more than just a speeding ticket:

- During the 100 most traveled days (Memorial Day - Labor Day) in 2019, preliminary numbers show speed played a role in 31 fatalities.
- During the 100 most traveled days in the past five years (2015-2019), preliminary numbers show that 125 people lost their lives in speed-related crashes.
- In 2019, speed was a contributing factor in 26 percent of single-vehicle crashes.

## **Consequences**

- Citations could cost \$100 or more plus court fees.
- Increased insurance fees.
- A motor vehicle crash involving speed could result in criminal or civil penalties.

## **Higher Speeds, Bigger Problems**

- Greater potential for loss of vehicle control.
- Increased stopping distance.
- Less time for driver response for crash avoidance.
- Increased crash severity leading to more severe injuries and death.

## **If Confronted With an Aggressive Driver:**

- Get out of their way; disengage. Move right, if you are able.
- Stay calm — reaching your destination safely is your goal.
- Do not challenge them.
- Avoid eye contact.
- Ignore gestures and don't return them.
- Report aggressive driving (vehicle description, license number, location).