
CLICK IT OR TICKET MAY SEAT BELT MOBILIZATION: PRE-ENFORCEMENT NEWS RELEASE

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92 UNBUCKLED MOTORISTS KILLED LAST YEAR IN MINNESOTA

Click It or Ticket: Extra Enforcement in Minnesota May 20 - June 2, 2019

Ninety-two people. That's four classrooms full of students. That's an entire NFL football team and their staff. That's how many unbuckled motorists were killed last year in Minnesota.

To remind motorists that seat belts save lives and it's the law to buckle up, the Crookston, East Grand Forks and Thief River Falls Police Departments and the Polk County Sheriff's Office, along with more than 300 law enforcement agencies across the state, will be participating in the statewide Click It or Ticket campaign May 20 – June 2. The Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety coordinates the extra enforcement and education campaign.

Join the Crowd

Most Minnesotans are making the life-saving decision to buckle up. According to the 2018 Minnesota Seat Belt Survey, 92.4 percent of front seat occupants are wearing their seat belts. Unfortunately, that means more than 7 percent of motorists continue to risk their lives and the lives of those in the vehicle by failing to buckle up.

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

- 172 unbelted motor vehicle occupants experienced life-changing injuries in 2018.
- In 2018, nearly 70 percent of the unbelted deaths occurred in Greater Minnesota (outside the seven-county metro area).
- In 2018, 36 percent of all motor vehicle deaths involved unbelted occupants, compared with 32 percent in 2017.
- Children are paying with their lives if they are not in proper car seats. From 2014 – 2018 in Minnesota:
 - 17 children (ages 0-7) were killed in motor vehicles and only seven of the victims were known to be properly secured (5 were not properly restrained, and restraint use was unknown in 5 fatalities).
 - Of the 90 children (ages 0-7) seriously injured in motor vehicles, only 49 percent of the victims were known to be properly secured.

“We’ve heard the argument, ‘It should be my choice to buckle up,’” said EGFPD Police Chief Mike Hedlund “But before you decide not to wear that belt, think of those children who didn’t have the choice to live without their mother or father. Or the spouse who will raise their children on their own. All because someone made the selfish choice to not wear their belt. You can’t choose who else is on the road with you, but you can choose to protect yourself by buckling up.”

Speak Up about Buckling Up

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

Drivers are in charge of their vehicles and the safety of their passengers. They can refuse to start the car until every passenger is belted. Passengers can also 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 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 feet 9 inches 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 tall. It is recommended to keep a child in a booster seat based on their size rather than their age. 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.

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.