PARTNERS SHOULD WORK WITH SURROUNDING AREA AGENCIES OR SAFE COMMUNITY COALITIONS ON NEWS RELEASES TO AVOID DUPLICATION WHEN ISSUING TO MEDIA.

**CONTACT: First Last Names, Phone, Email**

**Click It or Ticket Campaign Protects Drivers and Passengers Across Minnesota**

[YOUR CITY/COUNTY] — Seat belts save lives every day. They can only save lives, however, if they’re used, and there are still many people in Minnesota who don’t buckle up. National research shows that wearing a seat belt can reduce the risk of a fatal injury by 45 percent. That is why [YOUR AGENCY] is joining law enforcement agencies statewide and participating in the Click It or Ticket seat belt campaign Sept. 17-23.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety’s Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) coordinates the enforcement, education and awareness campaign with funding provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The campaign includes extra enforcement and awareness across Minnesota in support of the Toward Zero Deaths traffic safety program.

“Buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash,” said [spokesperson name]. “It keeps you safely inside your vehicle, whereas being completely thrown out of your car is almost always deadly.”

Buckling up can prevent a tragedy. Preliminary counts from the Office of Traffic Safety show 87 unbelted motorists died on Minnesota roads in 2022. While that is fewer than the 110 who died in 2021, we are working to get that number to zero.

**Buckle Up and Live**

The 2022 Minnesota observational seat belt survey showed 93 percent compliance for front seat occupants. There are signs of improvement in unbelted fatalities, but even one life lost in a crash is one too many.

* Preliminary counts show 87 unbelted motorists died on Minnesota roads in 2022 compared with 110 in 2021 and 105 in 2020.
* The 87 unbelted deaths last year is a 21 percent reduction from the previous year and slightly higher than pre-pandemic rates.
* 76 percent of unbelted fatalities in 2022 occurred in greater Minnesota.

**Buckle Up and Prevent Life-Changing Injuries**

Most Minnesotans’ choice to wear a seat belt has helped reduce the number of severe crash injuries. In 1987, there were 4,176 vehicle occupants who suffered severe injuries in traffic crashes. That number was 1,244 last year.

**Proper Car Seat Use Protects Your Littlest Loved Ones**

Of the 13,705 children ages 0-7 properly restrained in crashes from 2018-2022, 88 percent were not injured. Another 9 percent sustained only minor injuries.

**Minnesota Car Seat Law and Steps**

All children must be in a child safety seat until they are 4 feet, 9 inches tall, or at least 8 years old, 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 preschool-age children 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: School-age children who have reached the height and weight limits of the forward-facing seat can sit on a booster seat. The booster must be used with a lap and shoulder belt.
* Seat belts: Buckling up with a seat belt is for children 8 years old or who have reached 4 feet, 9 inches. Your children are ready for adult seat belts 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.

**The Law is for Safety**

Minnesota law requires all drivers and passengers to wear seat belts or be in the correct child restraint. Belts should be tight across the hips or thighs and should never be tucked under the arm or behind the back.

**Resources:**

* [DriveSmartMN.org](https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/drive-smart/Pages/default.aspx)
* [BuckleUpKids.dps.mn.gov](https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/child-passenger-safety/Pages/default.aspx)