



NEWS RELEASE

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MORE THAN 7,700 CITED DURING *CLICK IT OR TICKET SEAT BELT ENFORCEMENT*

ST. PAUL — A two-week, statewide “Click It or Ticket” seat belt enforcement campaign resulted in 7,726 seat belt citations. The enforcement sweep ran May 19–June 1 and included around 400 Minnesota law enforcement agencies. During 2004–2006 in Minnesota, 1,274 vehicle occupants died in traffic crashes, and 658 (52 percent) of the victims were not wearing seat belts. A seat belt fine is \$25 and can ramp up to \$115 with court costs and administrative fees.

The campaign followed a rash of unbelted traffic deaths in late April and early May. The effort also covered the start of the summer driving season — summer is the deadliest time on Minnesota roads.

To-date, 318 agencies have reported citation totals, the final ticket tally will increase as more agencies submit reports. The *Safe & Sober* effort was coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS). A similar campaign in 2007 generated nearly 8,500 belt citations.

Special patrols were employed during the effort to combat unbelted traffic deaths at night resulting in 572 citations. During 2004–2006, 66 percent of the traffic victims killed between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. were not wearing seat belts. The campaign also targeted child passenger safety — 180 motorists were cited for improper use or non-use of child restraints.

“Until every motorist buckles up every ride, Minnesota will likely continue to see unbelted traffic deaths accounting for more than 200 deaths a year,” says Cheri Marti, director of DPS Office of Traffic Safety. “A seat belt is your best defense on the road against speeding, distracted and impaired drivers.”

The Minnesota State Patrol issued 1,325 seat belt citations. Among metro agencies, St. Paul Police Department issued 338 citations, followed by the police departments of Minneapolis (256), Centennial Lakes (a partnership of agencies from Anoka County) (238), Champlin (163), Woodbury (150), Roseville (103), and Maplewood (102). Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office reported 117 citations. In greater Minnesota, St. Cloud Police Department issued 120 citations, followed by Owatonna (107), St. Peter (94), Rochester (70), and Moorhead (61). The sheriff’s office of Cass County reported 57 citations.

Ongoing seat belt and impaired driving enforcement efforts will continue through 2008.

Buckle Up. Click It or Ticket.

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