



NEWS RELEASE

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FIRST STATEWIDE ENFORCEMENT OF PRIMARY SEAT BELT LAW RESULTS IN 10,081 CITATIONS

Year-to-Date Traffic Deaths, Unbelted Deaths Down Compared to 2008

ST. PAUL — Minnesota's first statewide, full-scale seat belt enforcement effort since the primary seat belt law became effective June 9 resulted in 10,081 seat belt citations. The campaign ran Oct. 9–22. Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) officials say education and enforcement of the new belt law has helped push the state's belt use rate to a record high 90 percent, and as a result, factored in a lower death count for the year and fewer unbelted deaths compared to 2008.

To date, DPS reports 340 traffic deaths for the year compared to 370 at this time in 2008. DPS officials have also looked at parallel data since the law became effective to track unbelted death trends. During June 9–Nov. 2, preliminary numbers reflect 44 unbelted deaths, compared to 60 unbelted deaths recorded during this same period in 2008. Each year, more than half of all motorist traffic deaths are unbelted. In 2008, 150 vehicle occupants killed were not buckled up.

The tickets from the campaign include 187 child seat citations and 1,606 nighttime belt citations. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) included nighttime patrols in the campaign as more than 60 percent of traffic deaths during the 9 p.m.–5 a.m. time period are unbelted.

A similar May 2009 belt enforcement campaign resulted in 7,189 belt citations.

"Law enforcement officers see the tragic results of crashes in which a motorist could have survived if they were belted, and that is their motivation to enforce this important law," says Captain Matt Langer of the Minnesota State Patrol.

Minnesota's primary belt law states drivers and all passengers, including in the back seat, must be buckled up or in the correct child restraint. Law enforcement will stop drivers and passengers for seat belt violations. A belt citation costs more than \$100.

To-date, 295 law enforcement agencies have reported citation totals, the final number of citations will increase as more agencies submit reports. Around 400 agencies participated in the enhanced enforcement.

During the campaign, the Minnesota State Patrol issued 2,251 seat belt citations. Among metro agencies, St. Paul Police Department issued 586 citations, followed by the police departments of Minneapolis (244), Richfield (170) and Edina (132). Roseville PD, St. Anthony PD and Ramsey County Sheriff's Office each issued 117 tickets. In greater Minnesota, St. Cloud PD issued 252 citations, followed by Moorhead PD (223), Olmsted County Sheriff's Office (137), Mankato PD (126) and Hutchinson PD (114).

Editor's Note: *To request an agency-by-agency break out of seat belt citations, email Nathan.bowie@state.mn.us.*



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