



NEWS RELEASE

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ON THE THANKSGIVING EVE MENU: EXTRA DWI PATROLS

Public Safety Stresses Safe Travel for Deadly Holiday Weekend

ST. PAUL — Minnesota law enforcement will dish out extra helpings of DWI enforcement on Thanksgiving eve to curb a historically dangerous night for impaired driving. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) also is stressing safe travel for the busy holiday weekend. In Minnesota during the last three years (2006–2008), 19 people were killed during the Thanksgiving travel period (Wed.–Sun.).

Impaired driving and seat belt use are primary concerns during the high-traffic holiday. Of the 19 deaths, 10 were alcohol-related and more than half of the motorists killed were unbelted. During this same three-year time period, 2,232 motorists were arrested for DWI.

“Every year Thanksgiving turns tragic, resulting in empty chairs around the dinner table,” says Captain Matt Langer of the State Patrol. “Enforcing seat belt use and being alert for impaired drivers are two key ingredients to ensure safety. We strongly encourage motorists to do their part by making safe decisions behind the wheel.”

The extra enforcement will be conducted in the Twin Cities and across the state. The DWI patrols will include seat belt enforcement — each year 75 percent of the impaired drivers killed are also not buckled up.

Minnesota’s primary seat belt law requires drivers and all passengers, including in the back seat, 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.

DPS officials provide these safe travel tips for the holiday:

- Buckle up — before and after you gobble up.
- Plan for enough travel time to avoid the urge to speed — don’t put your schedule ahead of other motorists’ safety.
- Pay attention and be patient — Thanksgiving is one of the busiest, highest-volume travel periods of the year.
- Plan for a safe and sober ride in advance of partying — designate a sober driver, call a cab or public transportation, or spend the night at the location of the celebration.

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