
CLICK IT OR TICKET SEPTEMBER SEAT BELT MOBILIZATION: POST-ENFORCEMENT NEWS RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

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DRIVE SMART: IT CAN ONLY SAVE YOUR LIFE IF IT'S BUCKLED

*Law Enforcement in **Northfield** Cited 6 Unbelted Motorists
during Extra Enforcement and Awareness Campaign*

Northfield, MN – Wallet. Mirrors. Radio. The checklist some Minnesotans go through before putting their car into drive dangerously excludes the seat belt. That decision cost the lives of 73 unbelted motorists last year in Minnesota. The **Northfield Police Department** ticketed 6 unbelted motorists during the Click It or Ticket extra enforcement and awareness campaign as a reminder that it's the law, and it's a lifesaver to buckle up.

Sheriff's deputies, police officers and state troopers representing more than 300 agencies participated in the Sept. 18 – 30 campaign. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (DPS-OTS) coordinates the statewide campaign and the funding provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"Most Minnesotans buckle up, but very disturbingly, more people are dying statewide than last year because they're unbelted," said **Sergeant Kevin Tussing**. "Statewide traffic fatalities are running higher than recent years, and more unbelted deaths are sadly contributing to the heartache. That windshield may stop you from flying out of the vehicle in a crash, but you'll likely be dead or seriously injured. If you're unbelted and get thrown from the vehicle, your life is likely over. Take two seconds and put that belt on, and make sure your passengers do as well. Drive smart and buckle up so the breath you take before an unexpected crash isn't your last one."

As of Sept. 28, 67 fatalities involved unbelted motorists this year compared with 52 at this time last year.

Drive Smart by Expecting the Unexpected

According to the 2019 Minnesota Seat Belt Survey, 93.4 percent of front seat occupants were wearing their seat belts. Taking two seconds to click it protects even the most skilled motorists from unpredictable drivers and road hazards, such as:

- the distracted driver drifting into your lane.
- the deer that jumps into your path.
- the aggressive driver who is tailgating or cutting you off.

Seat belts and child safety seats are helping save lives and prevent life-changing injuries.

- In 1987, 4,176 vehicle occupants suffered severe injuries in traffic crashes. That number dropped to 1,052 in 2019.
- In crashes from 2015 – 2019, of the 17,055 children ages 0-7 that were properly restrained, 87 percent were not injured while another 10 percent sustained only possible injuries.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that seat belts saved an estimated 14,955 lives across the U.S. in 2017.
- If you buckle up in the front seat of a passenger car, you can reduce your risk of fatal injury by 45 percent (Kahane, 2015, as reported by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

Speak Up about Buckling Up

Drivers are in charge of their vehicles and of the safety of their passengers. They can refuse to start the car until every passenger is belted. Passengers also can speak up if the driver is endangering everyone in the vehicle by not buckling up.

The Law is for Safety

Minnesota law requires drivers and passengers in all seating positions to buckle up or be seated in the correct child safety seat. 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.
- 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 - School-age children who have reached the height and weight limits of the forward-facing seat can sit on a booster seat. It must be used with a lap and shoulder belt.
- Seat belts - Children 8 years old or have reached 4 feet 9 inches tall can buckle up with seat belts. 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.