

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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

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## **DRIVE SMART AND BUCKLE UP: EXTRA ENFORCEMENT SEPT. 18-30**

*Greater Minnesota Seeing Largest Percentage of Unbelted Traffic Fatalities*

Owatonna, MN –Driving in Greater Minnesota with the open countryside and less traffic can be a welcome contrast to the congestion of city driving. What isn't different is the need to buckle up to stay alive. In 2019, 77 percent of the unbelted deaths occurred in Greater Minnesota.

The Owatonna Police Department is joining more than 300 agencies in the statewide Click It or Ticket campaign Sept. 18-30 to enforce the life-saving seat belt law and remind motorists to drive smart. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (DPS-OTS) coordinates the campaign and the funding provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

### **You Never Get Over Ejection**

Most Minnesotans are making the life-saving decision to buckle up. According to the 2019 Minnesota Seat Belt Survey, 93.4 percent of front seat occupants are wearing their seat belts. The rest are gambling with their lives and the lives of others in the vehicle by riding unbelted.

### **Bad decisions contribute to life-changing outcomes**

- In 2019, 73 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads.
- Adults must take the time to correctly use child restraints, teach children the value of buckling up and model seat belt use. From 2015 – 2019:
  - 17 children (ages 0-7) were killed in motor vehicles
  - Seven of the victims were properly secured, six were not properly restrained, and restraint use was unknown in four fatalities.
  - Of the 87 children (ages 0-7) seriously injured in motor vehicles, 53 percent were known to be properly secured.

### **Good decisions are a lifesaver**

- 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.

- In 1987, 4,176 vehicle occupants suffered severe injuries in traffic crashes. That number dropped to 1,052 in 2019.

### **Save Face. Buckle Up. Drive Smart.**

An unbelted motorist can crash into a windshield, be thrown into other passengers or ejected from the vehicle and killed.

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

### **The Law is for Safety**

Minnesota law states that drivers and passengers in all seating positions must wear seat belts or be in the correct child restraint. Officers will ticket unbelted drivers or passengers. Occupants must correctly wear seat belts low and snug across the hips, and they should never tuck straps 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.