

# **PUBLIC INFORMATION RELEASE**

**Owatonna Police Department  
204 East Pearl Street  
Owatonna, MN 55060**



## **For Release Immediately**

Friday, September 14, 2018

## **For Further Information Contact**

Sergeant Jason Petterson  
507-774-7223

**Keith E. Hiller  
CHIEF OF POLICE**

Starting Monday, September 17, 2018 the Owatonna Police Department will be participating in the Statewide Seatbelt Enforcement Campaign that runs through the 29<sup>th</sup>.

See the attached News Release provided by the MN Department of Public Safety for further details.



Alcohol  
and Gambling  
Enforcement

Bureau of  
Criminal  
Apprehension

Driver  
and Vehicle  
Services

Emergency  
Communication  
Networks

Homeland  
Security and  
Emergency  
Management

Minnesota  
State Patrol

Office of  
Communications

Office of  
Justice Programs

Office of  
Pipeline Safety

Office of  
Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal

## NEWS RELEASE

Bruce Gordon, Director of Communications

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 13, 2018

### CONTACT:

Dave Boxum, [dave.boxum@state.mn.us](mailto:dave.boxum@state.mn.us), 651-201-7569  
Scott Wasserman, [scott.wasserman@state.mn.us](mailto:scott.wasserman@state.mn.us), 651-201-7571

### TAKE TWO SECONDS TO SAVE YOUR LIFE OR RISK A LIFE-ENDING DECISION

*Click It or Ticket: Extra Seat Belt Enforcement Statewide Sept. 17 - 29*

ST. PAUL – The single most effective thing Minnesotans can do to protect themselves in a crash? Air bags alone aren't the answer: in a crash, a rapidly opening frontal air bag could injure or kill someone if riding unbelted. Being a highly skilled driver is not the sole answer: a person's skills won't always protect them from other drivers and road hazards.

Buckling up is the single most effective choice for protection in a crash.

To remind motorists that seat belts save lives and it's the law to buckle up, more than 300 law enforcement agencies across the state will be participating in the statewide Click It or Ticket campaign Sept. 17 - 29. The Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety coordinates the extra enforcement and education campaign.

### Join the Crowd

Most Minnesotans are making the life-saving decision to buckle up. According to the 2018 Minnesota Seat Belt Survey, 92.4 percent of front seat occupants are wearing their seat belts. About 7 percent of motorists need to take two seconds to click it and join the crowd to help themselves and others survive a crash. An unbelted motorist can crash into a windshield or get thrown into other passengers, injuring or killing them. Often times, an unbelted occupant is ejected from the vehicle and killed.

Choosing not to buckle up is tragically hurting families across Minnesota.

- In 2017, 78 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads.
- There were 1,215 life-changing injuries in 2017 due to unbelted motorists.
- In 2017, 76 percent of the unbelted deaths occurred in Greater Minnesota (outside the seven-county metro area).
- In 2017, 32 percent of all motor vehicle deaths involved unbelted occupants, compared with 30 percent in 2016.

Children are paying with their lives if they are not in proper car seats. From 2013 – 2017 in Minnesota:

- 18 children (ages 0-7) were killed in motor vehicles and only nine of the victims were known to be properly secured (5 were not properly restrained, and restraint use was unknown in 4 fatalities).
- Of the 83 children (ages 0-7) seriously injured in motor vehicles, only 47 percent of the victims were known to be properly secured.

“Life is so unpredictable, but there’s an easy way to remove uncertainty, at least while you’re on the road: buckle up” said Mike Hanson, Office of Traffic Safety director. “Until everyone chooses to wear their seat belts, that uncertainty about safety will never go away. Not for the driver, the passenger or the family waiting at home. We all need to expect the unexpected on the road and control what we can by simply buckling up.”

### **Challenge Yourself and Others to Buckle Up**

Drivers are in charge of their vehicles and the safety of their passengers. If you are a driver, be a leader. A driver can refuse to start the car until every passenger is belted. If you are a parent, make it fun. Ask your kids who can buckle up the fastest, then educate them on the importance of buckling up. Passengers can also speak up and challenge others in the car to be safe. If the driver is endangering everyone in the vehicle by not buckling up, refuse to ride in the car until they strap on their seat belt.

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

Minnesota law states that drivers and passengers in all seating positions must be buckled or seated in the correct child restraint. 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 – The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that 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. It is safest to keep children rear-facing up to the maximum weight limit of the car seat.
- 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 - For school-age children who have reached the height and weight limits of the forward-facing seat. The booster must be used with a lap and shoulder belt.
- Seat belts - For children over 8 years old or have reached 4 feet 9 inches tall. It is recommended to keep a child in a booster seat based on their size rather than their age. 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.

### **About the Minnesota Department Public Safety**

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) comprises 11 divisions where 2,100 employees operate programs in the areas of law enforcement, crime victim assistance, traffic safety, alcohol and gambling, emergency communications, fire safety, pipeline safety, driver licensing, vehicle registration and emergency management. DPS activity is anchored by three core principles: education, enforcement and prevention.

### **About the Office of Traffic Safety**

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (DPS-OTS) designs, implements and coordinates federally funded traffic safety enforcement and education programs to improve driver behaviors and reduce the deaths and serious injuries that occur on Minnesota roads. DPS-OTS also administers state funds for the motorcycle safety program and for child seats for the needy families program.

DPS-OTS is an anchoring partner of the state's Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) traffic safety program. A primary vision of the TZD program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. TZD focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes – education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma response — and everyone doing the right thing when driving.

### **Recent DPS-OTS Activity and Statistics**

- Officers, deputies and troopers arrested 1,369 drivers for DWI during the Aug. 17 – Sept. 2 extra enforcement campaign, compared with 1,370 arrests during last year's campaign.
- During the extra speed enforcement campaign from July 6 – 22, officers, deputies and troopers from more than 300 agencies issued 14,661 speed citations and 1,625 child seat violations.
- During the extra seat belt enforcement campaign from May 21 – June 3, seat belt citations declined for the fourth straight year. Officers, deputies and troopers from 318 agencies reported 6,684 seat belt citations and 147 child seat violations.

###