

## Traffic Safety Update

Alert your employees to changes in Minnesota's seat belt law and child passenger safety law:

**Seat belt law.** Buckling up has been the law in Minnesota since 1986. **What's new:** Effective June 9, everybody in every seat must be buckled, and law enforcement can now pull people over for violating the law (primary enforcement) instead of issuing a citation only after witnessing another moving violation.

**Child passenger safety.** Effective July 1, 2009, a child who is both under age 8 and shorter than 4 feet 9 inches is required to be fastened in a child safety seat that meets federal safety standards. Under this law, a child cannot use a seat belt alone until they are age 8, or 4 feet 9 inches tall.

## Sizzlin' Summer Safety Tips



**Impaired driving.** Educate your employees about the dangers and consequences of driving while impaired. Alcohol is a major factor in fatal crashes over the July 4 holiday and a serious threat year-round. Each year, about 200 people are killed in alcohol-related crashes on Minnesota's roads, 3,500 are injured, and more than 35,000 are arrested for DWI. More than half a million Minnesotans have a DWI on record. For more information and free educational resources, see [www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/nets/impaireddriving.htm](http://www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/nets/impaireddriving.htm).

**Warm weather = increased speed.** Summer is the deadliest time of year on Minnesota roads. One reason: With warm weather comes an increase in speeding behavior. Speed is the

most commonly reported contributing factor in fatal crashes, with young drivers (under age 30) particularly at risk. According to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, speed contributes to about 150 traffic deaths and 7,000 injuries each year. Nearly 70 percent of speed-related crashes occur in rural areas.

Throughout July, law enforcement agencies statewide will increase speed patrols and ticket speeding motorists in an effort to save lives and help drive Minnesota "toward zero deaths." (The Toward Zero Deaths initiative is a multi-agency approach to traffic issues, involving enforcement, education, engineering and emergency trauma care and response.)

For information about additional resources and services available through Minnesota NETS, including free handout materials on impaired driving and speed, see [www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/nets](http://www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/nets) or contact NETS coordinator Lisa Kons at 651-228-7330/800-444-9150; [lisa.kons@minnesotasafetycouncil.org](mailto:lisa.kons@minnesotasafetycouncil.org).

NOTE: The information about impaired driving on the next page can be posted or distributed to your employees.





- Plan a safe way home before festivities begin
- Before drinking, designate a sober driver and give that person your keys
- If you're impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation so you are sure to get home safely
- Use your community's Sober Rides program
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don't hesitate to contact your local law enforcement

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**Whether you've had way too many or just one too many, it's not worth the risk. Impaired driving has serious consequences: jail time, loss of driver's license, higher insurance rates, and many other unanticipated expenses — attorney fees, other fines and court costs, car towing and repairs, lost time at work, and more.**

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