



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**City of Duluth - Police Department**

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**DATE: 5/19/2017**

**SUBJECT: BUCKLE UP AND PROTECT YOURSELF FROM UNSAFE DRIVERS AND UNPLANNED SITUATIONS**

**BY: Duluth Police Department Public Information Officer Ron Tinsley**

**NATURE OF INCIDENT: Media Release**

**CASE NO.:**

**INCIDENT DATE: 5/19/2017**

**INCIDENT TIME:**

**INCIDENT LOCATION: Duluth Area**

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**BUCKLE UP AND PROTECT YOURSELF FROM UNSAFE DRIVERS AND UNPLANNED SITUATIONS**

**Click it or Ticket: Extra Enforcement in Duluth and surrounding areas from May 22 – June 4**

A typical day for Minnesota drivers includes encounters with distracted drivers, farm machinery, road rage, deer and other unplanned situations. The danger is that being a safe, confident driver won't make a difference if a crash happens and the person isn't buckled up. With the arrival of Memorial Day weekend and the anticipation of warmer weather, road trips, barbecues and fun at the lake, seat belt safety should be a part of every Minnesotan's plans.

Motorists who are not buckled increase their odds of being injured by six-times if they are in a crash. To continue educating motorists that seat belts save lives and it's the law to buckle up, Duluth Police Department, along with more than 300 law enforcement agencies across the state, will be participating in the statewide Click It or Ticket campaign May 22 – June 4. The extra enforcement and education campaign is coordinated by the Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety.

**The Good News and Bad News**

**Fortunately, most Minnesotans are making the life-saving decision to buckle up.**

- According to the 2016 Minnesota Seat Belt Survey, 93 percent of front seat occupants are wearing their seat belts.
- Severe injuries are also going down. In 1987, there were 4,176 vehicle occupants who suffered severe injuries in traffic crashes. That number dropped to 745 in 2015.

**For those who choose not to buckle up, the results are tragically hurting families across Minnesota.**

- In 2015, 91 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads.
- In 2015, 87 percent of the unbelted deaths occurred in Greater Minnesota (outside the seven-county Metro area).

We may be good drivers but that's not always good enough to keep us safe in a crash if we choose to ignore the seat belt. A seat belt is like insurance. You hope it never has to save your life but if another driver crosses the center line toward you, is distracted or drunk, that seat belt may be the only thing that keeps you alive if there's a crash. Please buckle up because you just never know what'll happen on the road.

**Speak Up about Buckling Up**

An unbelted motorist can crash into a windshield and get thrown into other passengers. Often times, an unbelted occupant is ejected from the vehicle and killed.

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 states that drivers and passengers in all seating positions must be buckled up 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 4'9" tall, or at least age 8, whichever comes first.

- Rear-facing child seats - Newborns to at least 1 year and 20 pounds; recommended up to age 2. It is safest to keep a child rear-facing as long as possible.
- Forward-facing seats - Age 2 until around age 4. It's preferable to keep children in a harnessed restraint until they reach the maximum weight limit.
- Booster seats - Use after outgrowing a forward-facing harnessed restraint; safest to remain in a booster until 4 feet 9 inches tall, or at least age 8, whichever comes first.
- Seat belts - Use when children can sit with their back against the vehicle seat and have their knees bent comfortably over the edge with their feet touching the floor.

### **Toward Zero Deaths**

The Click It or Ticket seat belt enforcement and education is a component of the state's Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) 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 trauma response.