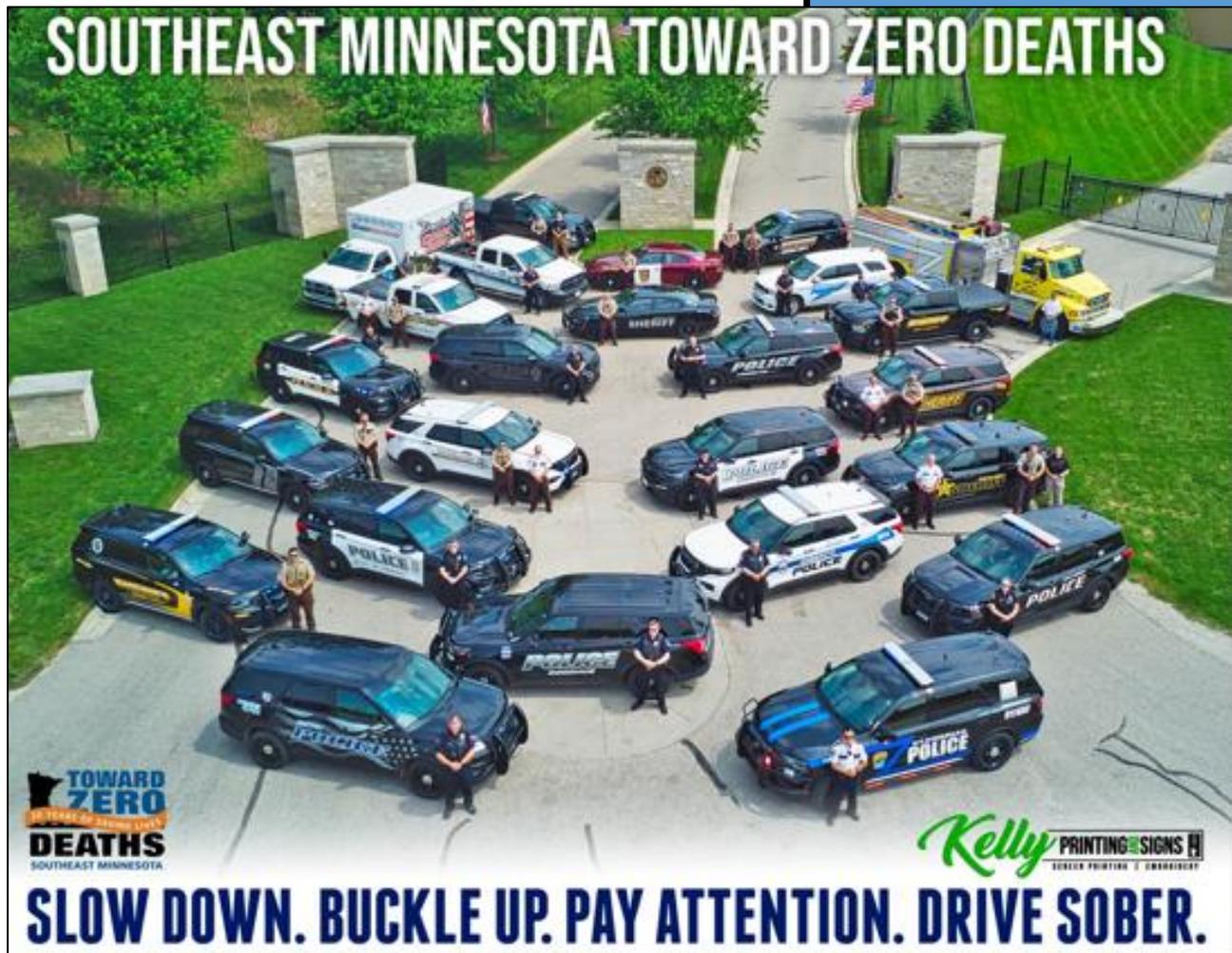


2022-2023

Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Annual Report



Jessica Schleck
Toward Zero Deaths
Regional Coordinator,
Southeast Region
October 2023

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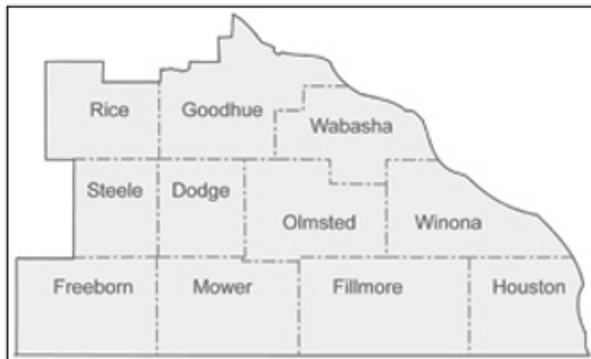
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Mission

To create a culture for which traffic fatalities and serious injuries are no longer acceptable through the integrated application of education, engineering, enforcement and emergency medical and trauma services. These efforts will be driven by data, best practices and research.

Values

- ❖ Continuous improvements
- ❖ Engage partners
- ❖ Evidence-based approaches

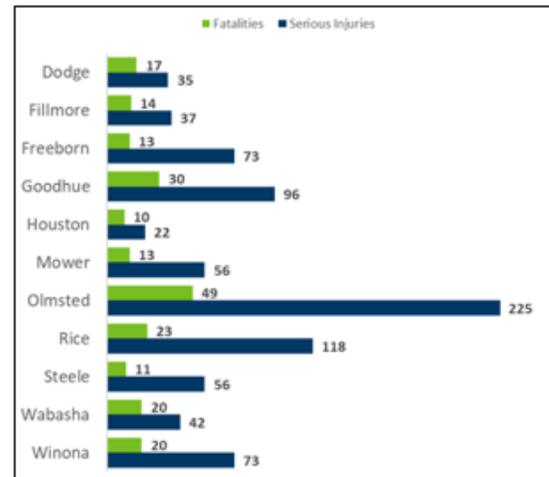


The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program began in 2005. The counties involved include Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona.

The leading cause of traffic-related deaths and severe injuries in southeast Minnesota include:

- ❖ **Lack of Seatbelt Use**
- ❖ **Speed and Aggressive Driving**
- ❖ **Alcohol**

Southeast Minnesota Fatalities and Serious Injuries
by County 2018-2022



The leading type of crash resulting in deaths and severe injuries include:

- ❖ **Careless/Reckless Driving**
- ❖ **Failure to Yield**

The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program is led by a Steering Committee comprised of the "4 Es:"

- ❖ Enforcement
- ❖ Engineering
- ❖ Education
- ❖ EMS/Emergency Medical & Trauma Services

Southeast Minnesota TZD Leadership Contacts

Engineering

Mark Schoenfelder
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Enforcement

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Education/EMS

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www.minnesotatzd.org



Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Regional Strategic Plan

Mission

To move southeast Minnesota toward zero deaths on our roads using education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma services.

Goal 1 – Reduce TZD Fatality and Serious Injuries

To continuously decrease traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries in southeast Minnesota from the past 5-year averages of 40 fatalities and 137 serious injuries (in 2018-2022).

Objectives:

- A. To continuously increase regional seat belt use rates.
As of April 2023, the seat belt compliance rate in southeast Minnesota was 89 percent. This is back to pre-pandemic (2019 = 89.0%) range. As a region, our long-term goal is to achieve a 100% usage rate. Our short-term goal is to see a continuous increase in the usage rate each year.
- B. To examine the characteristics of the unbelted fatalities and serious injuries. The 2018-2022 5-year average in Southeast Minnesota was 10 unbelted fatalities and 26 serious injuries.
- C. To continuously decrease the following:

Five Year Averages: Southeast TZD Region						
	Metric	Impaired	Speed	Distraction	Unbelted	Total
CRASHES	K Crashes	10	9	2	10	40
	A Crashes	35	29	9	22	137
	K+A Crashes	45	38	11	32	177
INJURIES	Fatalities	10	10	2	10	44
	A Injuries	44	36	11	26	167
	K+A Injuries	54	45	13	37	211

Note: a crash may have more than one of the above listed or additional contributing factors.

Total Southeast Minnesota Region

Baseline Comparison						
Metric	Total Count		Average	Avg. Annual Percent Change		
	2022	2018-2022	5-year Avg.	Regional	Statewide	
CRASHES	K Crashes	43	200	40	+1.9%	+7.0%
	A Crashes	159	687	137	+2.0%	+5.2%
	K+A Crashes	202	887	177	+2.0%	+5.6%
INJURIES	Fatalities	44	220	44	-1.7%	+6.3%
	A Injuries	184	833	167	-1.4%	+4.2%
	K+A Injuries	228	1,053	211	-1.5%	+4.6%

Goal 2 – TZD Partnership Goals

To continuously increase TZD awareness and partnerships across southeast Minnesota for both the general public and traffic safety professionals

1. Establish the vision of TZD as a priority for all region, county, city (government agencies)
 - A. Engage local government involvement in TZD steering committee and workshops
 - B. Educate/promote traffic safety awareness of city/county officials
 - C. Promote city/county employee education/policies that facilitate the TZD vision

Activities: Recruitment of city and county to attend TZD event, giving TZD presentations to boards/councils, mailings/connections to Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS)

2. Create and strengthen partnerships in the region
 - A. Engage stakeholders
 - B. Develop networking relationships
 - C. Recruit membership of the TZD partnership

Activities: EMS Conference booth/presentation, regional workshop, web, calendar, statistics, workshop, orientation

3. Promote and implement effective traffic safety initiatives in the region
 - A. Develop and distribute resource materials
 - B. Provide enforcement wave support in community
 - C. Promote evidence-based countermeasures
 - D. Collect data and statistics within region
 - E. Implement best practices within region

Activities: web, brochure, one-pagers, presentations, news advisories, workshop, seat belt observational survey and omnibus survey, media messaging and media events, news releases regarding activities woven into existing messages, worksite education and policy development, parent component to driver education, sober cab development, youth enforcement and education

Goal 1 – Reduce Fatal and Serious Injuries

Regional Steering Committee

Background: In 2006, the southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Steering Committee developed the traffic safety mission and goals for the region to move toward zero deaths for traffic-related crashes.

Problem Statement: In 2006, there were 494 deaths on Minnesota roadways and 69 of these deaths occurred on southeast Minnesota roadways – an unacceptable number. Southeast Minnesota TZD includes partners from the 11-county area (Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona) who work together to create initiatives and programs to reduce traffic fatalities.

A regional strategic plan was developed to identify goals and strategies required to achieve the mission. The data is reviewed yearly to ensure that the region continues to work to accomplish outreach and education goals that will help attain the overall fatality reduction goal.

Mission: To move southeast Minnesota toward zero deaths on our roads using education, enforcement, engineering, emergency medical and trauma services, and everyone else.

Goal 1 – Reduce Fatal and Serious Injuries

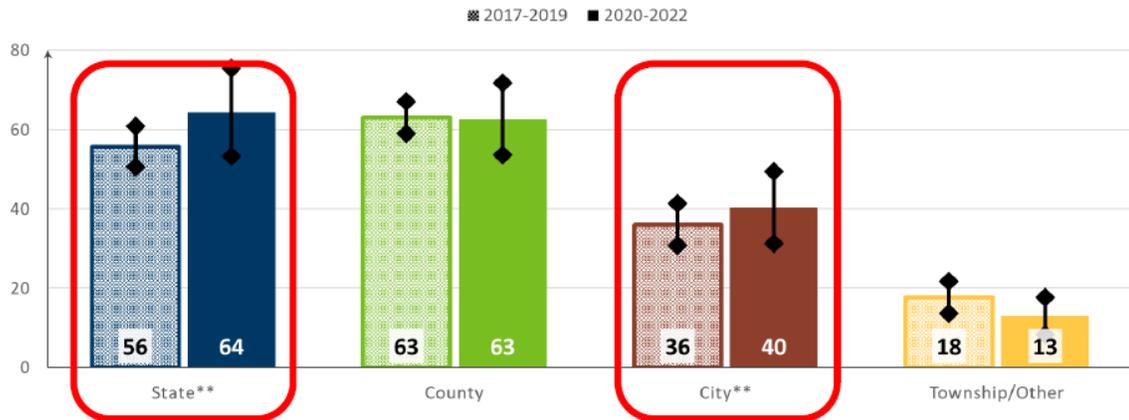
To continuously decrease traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries in southeast Minnesota from the past **5-year average** (2018-2022) of 44 fatalities and 167 serious injuries. Note: New injury definitions were introduced in 2016 and may have contributed to a higher reported number of serious injuries.

Five Year Averages: Southeast TZD Region						
	Metric	Impaired	Speed	Distraction	Unbelted	Total
CRASHES	K Crashes	10	9	2	10	40
	A Crashes	35	29	9	22	137
	K+A Crashes	45	38	11	32	177
INJURIES	Fatalities	10	10	2	10	44
	A Injuires	44	36	11	26	167
	K+A Injuries	54	45	13	37	211

Roadways | Southeast Region

2022 crashes preliminary as of 04/14/2023

Average annual fatal and serious injury crashes by roadway jurisdiction
 ** denotes a percent change greater than the percent change in all fatal and serious injury crashes



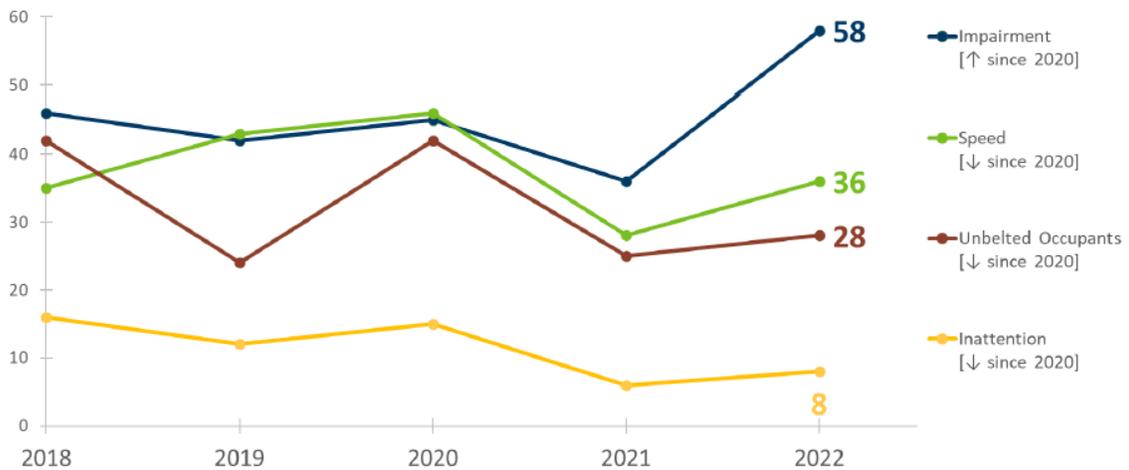
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Behavior Trends | Southeast Region

2022 crashes preliminary as of 04/14/2023



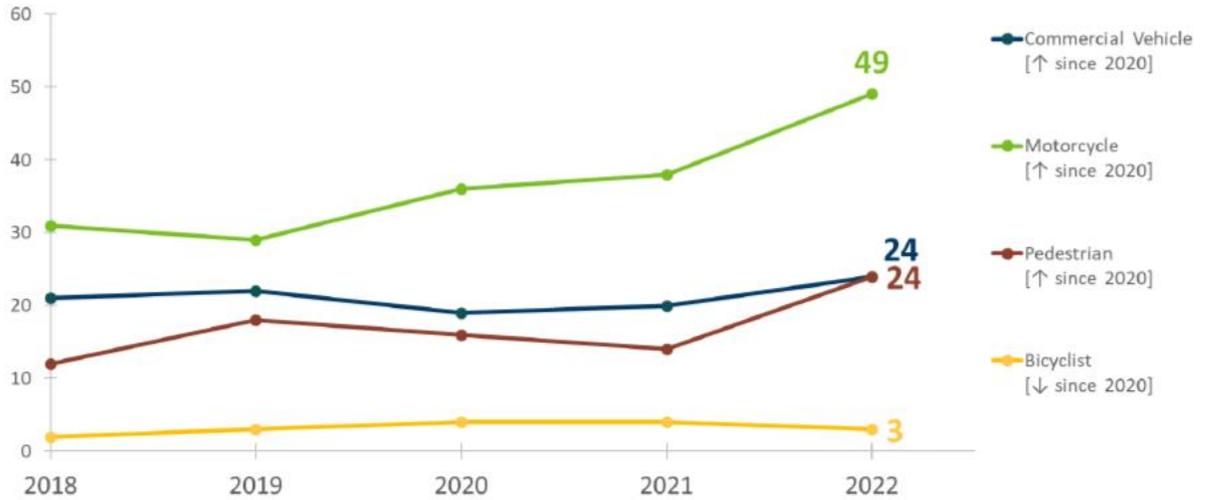
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Mode Trends | Southeast Region

2022 crashes preliminary as of 04/14/2023



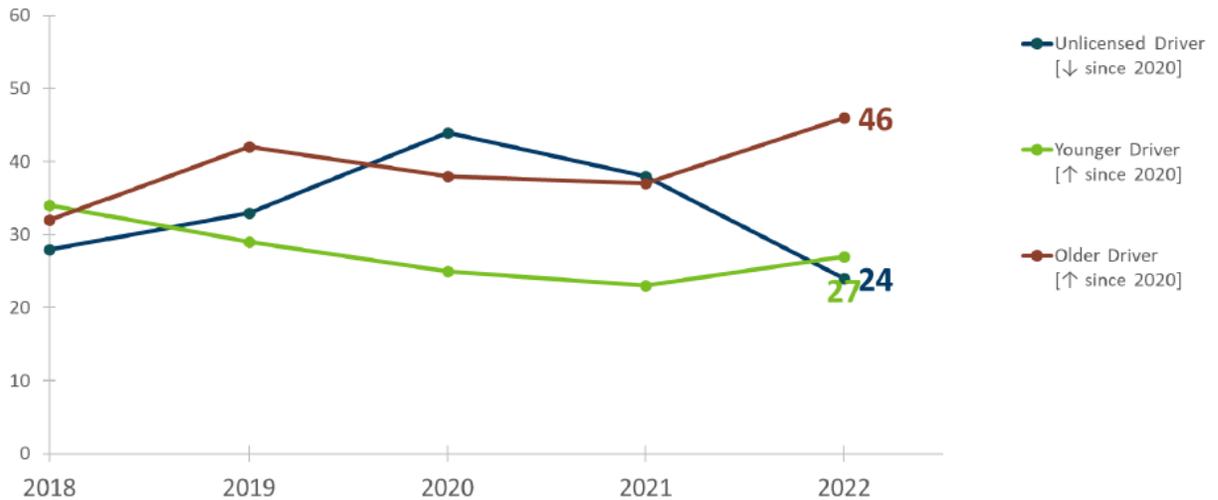
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Driver Trends | Southeast Region

2022 crashes preliminary as of 04/14/2023



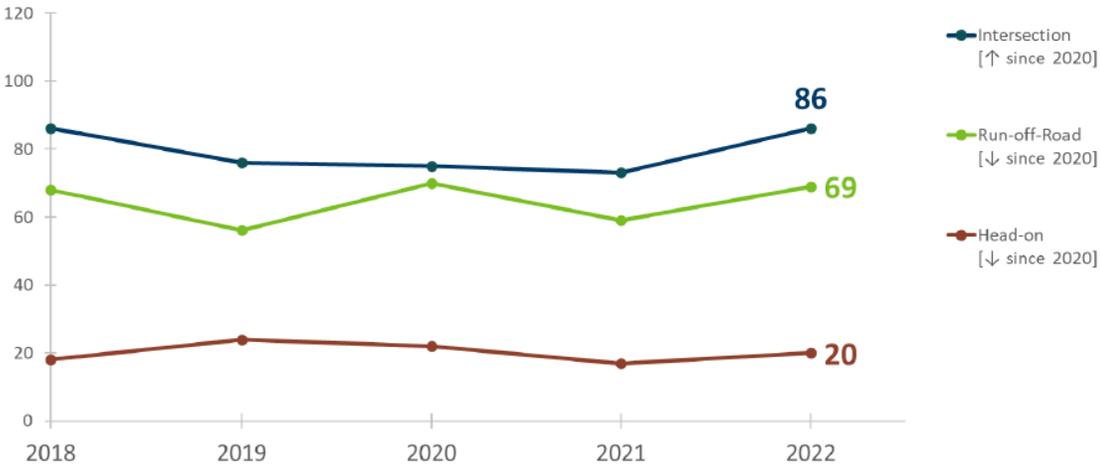
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Engineering Trends | Southeast Region

2022 crashes preliminary as of 04/14/2023



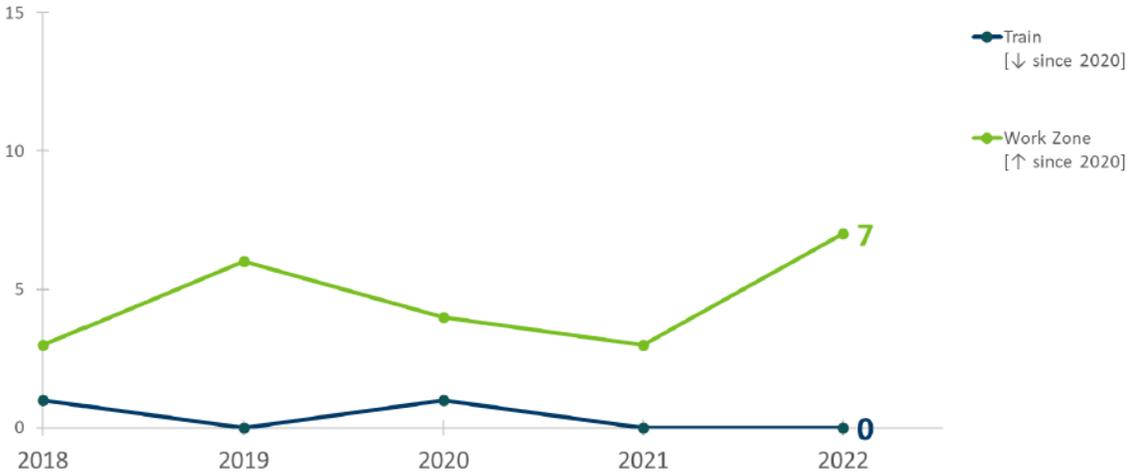
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Complex Trends | Southeast Region

2022 crashes preliminary as of 04/14/2023



5/5/2023

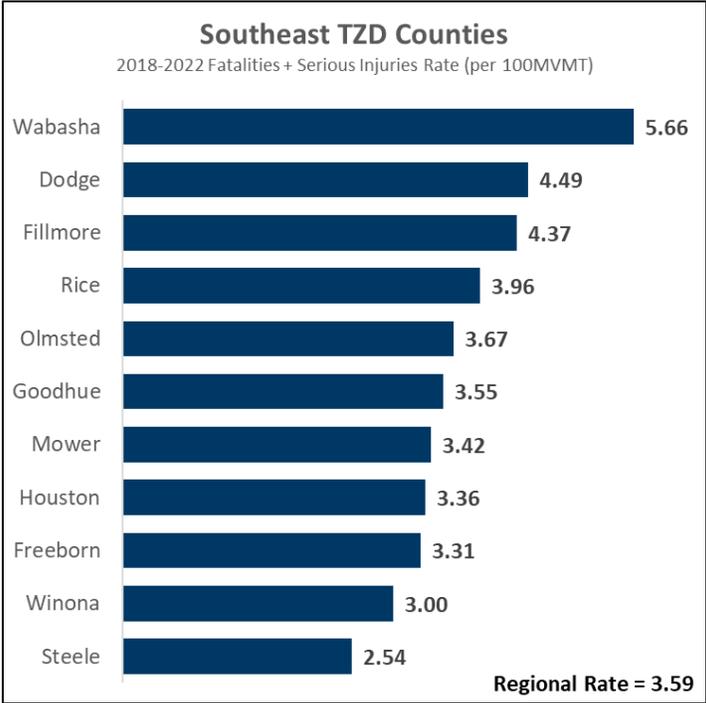
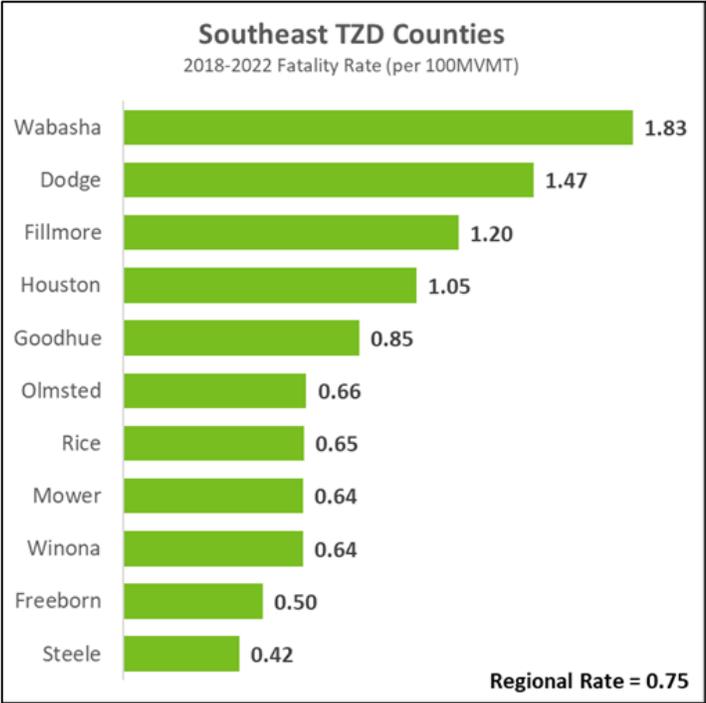
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Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes by Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Focus Areas							
<i>NOTE: number of crashes not people killed or seriously injured</i>							
SHSP Focus Area	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	5-Year Trend	
BEHAVIOR	Impairment	46	42	45	36	58	Increasing
	Speed	35	43	46	28	36	Decreasing
	Unbelted	42	24	42	25	28	Decreasing
	Inattention	16	12	15	6	8	Decreasing*
MODE	Comm. Vehicle	21	22	19	20	24	Increasing
	Motorcycle	31	29	36	38	49	Increasing*
	Pedestrian	12	18	16	14	24	Increasing
	Bicyclist	2	3	4	4	3	Increasing
DRIVER	Unlicensed	28	33	44	38	24	Decreasing
	Younger Driver	34	29	25	23	27	Decreasing*
	Older Driver	32	42	38	37	46	Increasing*
ROADWAY	Intersection	86	76	75	73	86	Decreasing
	Run-off-Road	68	56	70	59	69	Increasing
	Head-on	18	24	22	17	20	Decreasing
	Train	1	0	1	0	0	Decreasing
	Work Zone	3	6	4	3	7	Increasing

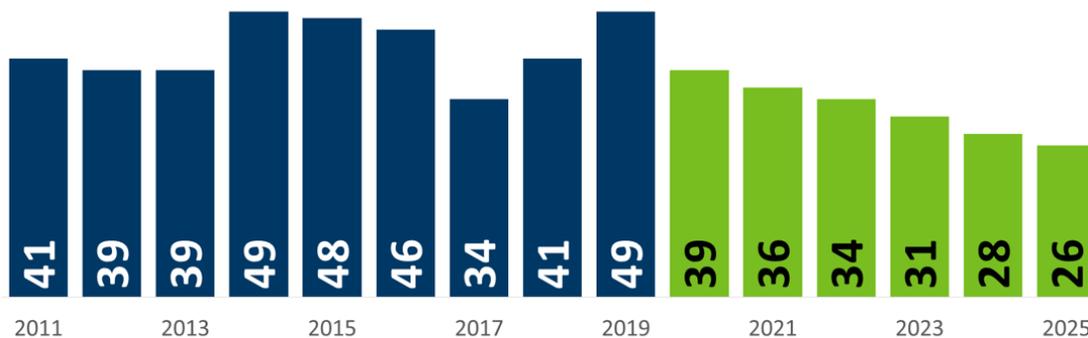
* A 5-Year Trend with an asterisk implies a significant change (alpha=0.10); trends without an asterisk do not have enough data to rule out zero change (i.e. no change).

2018-2022 Fatalities, Serious Injuries, and Motor Vehicle Miles Traveled Rates by County



How Does the REGION Contribute?

Southeast Regional Progression to 225 in 2025



10/13/2020

minnesotaTZD.org

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The chart above shows trends in fatalities from 2011 to 2019 within the Southeast TZD Region. The green bars show the necessary progress required to meet our target goal of no more than 225 fatalities statewide in 2025. Statewide, this translates into 23 fewer traffic fatalities every year. The regional numbers are scaled based on the number of fatalities within the TZD Region from 2016-2018.

Although statewide fatal and serious injury crashes were elevated in 2021, the southeast region saw a large decrease. This put the region on track to reach the 2025 goal of 26 or fewer fatalities. Although, as of September 30, 2023, the region has seen a increase, but remains on pace with 2022. See the 2017-2023 year-to-date fatality comparison for Southeast below.

YEAR-TO-DATE FATALITY COMPARISON January 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023

Southeast TZD County YTD 7-Year Fatality Comparison Jan 1st-Sep 30th							
County	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
Dodge	1	6	1	3	3	2	2
Fillmore	0	5	2	2	2	0	3
Freeborn	2	0	3	4	0	5	4
Goodhue	5	7	4	2	5	4	3
Houston	3	2	2	1	2	0	3
Mower	1	1	1	2	2	1	2
Olmsted	5	6	13	11	4	7	3
Rice	3	2	2	5	3	4	10
Steele	1	1	4	3	0	2	1
Wabasha	2	3	4	4	2	5	2
Winona	5	2	5	1	2	5	2
Total	28	35	41	38	25	35	35

Successes:

- The Southeast Minnesota TZD program aims to create a collaborative, comprehensive, regional approach to reduce traffic-related deaths and severe injuries. As part of these efforts, an annual workshop is held to help facilitate the implementation of TZD in all southeast Minnesota communities. More than 150 traffic-safety professionals attended the annual Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Workshop.
- Maintained partnerships with Wisconsin State Patrol, various law enforcement agencies from Wisconsin as well as the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.
- Community outreach with events focused on:
 - Seat Belts
 - Impaired Driving
 - Distracted Driving
 - Speeding
 - Hands-free Law
 - Motorcycle Safety
 - Pedestrian Safety
 - Traffic-Safety Culture
- 4-E coalitions continue to expand across the region in both funded and unfunded coalitions. All of the southeast counties have an active Safe Roads Coalition as well as an active Fatal Review Committee.
- Continued partnership with Olmsted County Sheriff's Office social media specialist to create numerous social media videos to coincide with enforcement periods. Many of the videos included an emphasis on changing traffic-safety culture. See example below.

Traffic Safety Culture

[Enforcement Efforts Keep Everyone Safe](#)

- Continued partnership with Olmsted County Sheriff's Office social media specialist to create social media posts to coincide with enforcement periods and TZD Tuesday. In 2023, Olmsted County Sheriff's Office social media posts featuring TZD content typically reached between 3,000-6,000 people. Some of the more popular posts included bike helmet safety/ice cream coupons, one of which reached 508,620 people and had 27,112 engagements. Another was a post featuring 'Drive Safe' t-shirts being distributed at homecoming events which reached over 11,000 people and had over 2,000 engagements. The B2B Speed Enforcement post reached 120,309 and had 17,150 engagements.



- Represented TZD on the Highway 52 Advisory Committee. This project required working with many landowners and businesses regarding the planning and execution of an interchange and access closings. TZD involvement was requested due to the closing of access points along the corridor due to safety improvements. The meeting included MnDOT, Goodhue County and township officials from Leon, Stanton, and Cannon Falls. The project was completed November 2022.



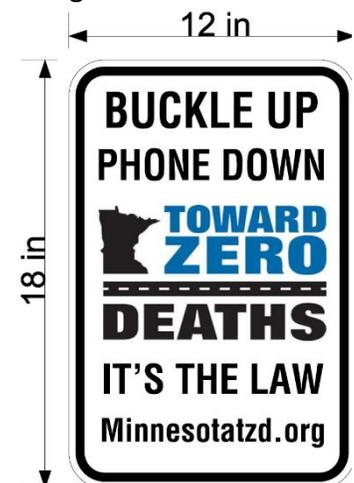
- Participated in County Highway Safety Improvement planning in southeast counties. TZD traffic-safety culture, vision, mission, and goals were presented at each meeting attended. This helped to build and maintain relationships with county agencies.

- Continued to develop relationships with local media. Media advisory, news release and all talking points were developed for events. Media packets were completed and distributed at each media event. KTTC-TV, KIMT-TV, KAAL-TV, Rochester Post-Bulletin, Dodge County Independent, Star Herald and KROC talk radio covered regional enforcement saturations and events.

- Worked with county engineers and southeast TZD law enforcement grantees to continue to identify locations for replacement of the Safe & Sober signs. More than 100 Safe & Sober signs have been replaced with updated TZD signs in Dodge, Goodhue, Fillmore, Houston, Olmsted, Rice, Wabasha, Winona.

- Local government presentations included the TZD mission, vision, and goals as well as updates on local efforts, successes, and challenges. State and local TZD representatives from each of the 5 Es were invited.

- Co-chaired the Statewide Speed Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Action Team and participating on the Speed Safety Speed Camera Subcommittee and Speed Roadway Design Subcommittee.



- Participating in the Motorcycle Safety Advisory Task Force, Child Passenger Safety Task Force, Traffic-Safety Culture Task Force and the We Bike Rochester Board meetings as able.
- Completed monthly reports accurately and timely.

Active funded coalitions

Assisted and supported the funded TZD Safe Roads coordinators in various capacities throughout the year with supplies needed, assistance with events or directing to appropriate resources.

- Fillmore
- Goodhue
- Rice
- Wabasha
- Winona

Org	PED SAFETY	NETS	SERVER	LOCAL GOVT. PRES	MC	CLINIC TEENS	SOBER CAB	IMPACT SPEAKER	POINT OF IMPACT	Mock Crash	Seatbelt Challenge	Innovative	Innovative 2
Fillmore Co. Public Health	x	x		x								Develop educational activity-based toolkit	Amish Buggy educational materials
Goodhue County	x	x		x				x			x	SB Challenge	
Rice Co. Public Health		x		x			x					belts/impaired traffic safety fair	
Wabasha Co. Public Health			x					x				Speed Feedback Monitoring with LEA	
Winona Co. Comm. Serv.	X		x					X				Impaired Simulator Fatal Vision Goggles	Seat Belt Convincer

Active unfunded coalitions

Assisted and supported the unfunded Freeborn County TZD Safe Roads coordinator in various capacities throughout the year with supplies needed, assistance with events, or directing to appropriate resources.

Facilitated the Dodge, Mower and Steele County Safe Roads coalitions. Was responsible for maintaining the coalition networks, meeting agendas, minutes and all activities and events as requested.

- Dodge County
- Freeborn County
- Mower County
- Olmsted County
- Steele County



Next steps:

The funded coalition leaders will continue to partner with the regional coordinator to develop regional activities for the enforcement periods. The TZD Safe Roads Coalition coordinators will continue to work with the regional coordinator and the Safe Roads Coalitions to complete the TZD Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Community Assessments as soon as the online tool is updated.

Regional Workshop

Southeast Minnesota TZD Workshop

May 3, 2023

The [2023 Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Workshop](#) was held at the International Event Center in Rochester on May 3, 2023. More than 150 traffic safety professionals representing all 11 counties participated in the event. Use the link above to find additional information, including workshop presentations. See media coverage on pages 58-64.

The Southeast Minnesota TZD program aims to create a collaborative, comprehensive and regional approach to reduce traffic deaths and severe injuries. As part of these efforts, an annual workshop is held to help facilitate the implementation of TZD in all southeast Minnesota communities. Encouraged to attend are law enforcement, engineers, educators, emergency medical services, local policymakers, and other traffic safety advocates.

The workshop participants are surveyed annually and each year the survey respondents rate the workshop with high marks and urge the planning team to continue to have the workshop annually. Anecdotally, the networking and forming of relationships across the 4E boundaries continue in southeast Minnesota.





**Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths
18th Annual Regional Workshop
International Event Center
7333 Airport View Dr. SW, Rochester
May 3, 2023**

Agenda

- 8:30 a.m. **Registration and Continental Breakfast**
- 9 a.m. **Welcome to the 20th Anniversary of TZD!**
Mark Schoenfelder, district engineer, MnDOT District 6 and southeast Minnesota TZD regional co-chair; Jessica Schleck, southeast Minnesota TZD regional coordinator
- 9:15 a.m. **Traffic Safety Culture: TZD 2.0 updates & What are other states doing?**
Kristine Hernandez, statewide TZD program coordinator, MnDOT Office of Traffic Engineering
- 9:30 a.m. **Crash Data Presentation: What's the data telling us?**
Mark Wagner, assistant state traffic safety engineer, MnDOT Office of Traffic Engineering
Recent trends in traffic fatalities and serious injuries statewide are concerning. Are there certain crash types that have contributed to this rise? Were the past years a brief spike or are we seeing a new trajectory? Review regional crash trends with an eye towards the Strategic Highway Safety Plan and potential opportunities for future strategies.
- 9:45 a.m. **Using Fatal Reviews and the Safe System Approach to Improve Intersection Safety**
David Tsang, traffic operations engineer, MnDOT District 6; Jessica Schleck, southeast Minnesota TZD regional coordinator
What is a Fatal and Serious Injury Crash Review Committee? Learn the purpose of the committee and the important roles that law enforcement, EMS, health educators and engineers have on the committee. As we continue our efforts into the Safe System approach, hear about the construction projects in southeast Minnesota that are saving lives.
- 10:15 a.m. **Break – Exhibits & Refreshments**
- 10:30 a.m. **School Bus Stop Arm Camera Grant Program**
Rahya Geisler, program coordinator, Dept. of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety; Lt. Brian Reu, Minnesota State Patrol; Deputy J.J. Mueller, Mower County Sheriff's Office
School bus stop arm cameras have been installed in school buses across the region to keep students safe as they get on and off them. The cameras provided through the project help schools and law enforcement find the violators and hold them accountable. Hear how the program works, along with the successes and challenges.
- 10:45 a.m. **Teaching Traffic Safety through Science**
Cindy Morgan, MnDOT public engagement coordinator, MnDOT District 6
MnDOT has partnered with TZD to teach traffic safety through science! This program uses the seat belt convincer to introduce the physics behind the crash. The newly developed curriculum explains how speed affects the force of a crash and demonstrates how seat belts save lives. This new program will be piloted this spring in high school physics classes in the region.

- 11 a.m. **Focusing on What Matters**
Amber Peterson, managing partner, Peterson & Perme Associates
 Quite often, people feel overly impacted by their environment and helpless to change what’s going on in their own mind. Yet, our mindset (attitude and beliefs) is greatly impacted by what we choose to focus on. Who do we surround ourselves with? What is important that we should focus our energy? What boundaries should we hold around our values? This session will guide participants to examine what they are focusing on in their lives, decide if it’s what they truly want, and empower them to make the changes they see they need to live a more fulfilled and satisfied life.
- 12 p.m. **Lunch & Exhibits**
- 12:45 p.m. **Listening Session**
Southeast Minnesota TZD Regional Co-chairs: Mark Schoenfelder, district engineer, MnDOT District 6; Capt. Brian Buck, Minnesota State Patrol, District 2100
 How can we reinvigorate the Toward Zero Deaths program? Tell us how things are going in your communities. What do you need from your regional TZD Steering Committee and leadership?
- 1 p.m. **What I Do Matters: Recognizing My Values within Our Workplace Communities**
Lizzie Merrill, Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Equity and Diversity
 We will be taking a deep dive into what our values are and how they impact the work that we do. Using our values as a foundation to support us and inspire us, we will spend time thinking about how we can continue to strive for excellence within our roles and be motivated to continue to serve our communities.
- 1:30 p.m. **What’s Your Goal for 2023 and Beyond?**
 How can you use what you learned today to start making changes in your communities? Please use the notecards on your table to respond to the questions below then discuss as a group. Responses will be captured and available to all participants following the workshop.
1. From your perspective – what has been most meaningful from today’s presentations?
 2. What is giving you hope/energy to move forward?
 3. What are your most important next steps?
- 1:45 p.m. **Break – Exhibits & Refreshments**
- 2 p.m. **Cannabis DWIs... They’re Not So Simple**
Sgt. Tyler Milless, DRE coordinator, Minnesota State Patrol
 With the constant rise in cannabis in Minnesota, and the potential of legalization, it is important to know how to detect cannabis-induced impairment. This session will take you through the cannabis plant and take a dive into what it does to the human body. You will learn specific things to look for when detecting someone who is impaired by cannabis.
- 2:50 p.m. **Wrap up**
Capt. Brian Buck, Minnesota State Patrol, District 2100 and southeast TZD regional co-chair
- 3 p.m. **Adjourn & Door Prizes**

Please take time throughout the day to visit the traffic-safety exhibit tables for reference materials and ideas to implement in your communities.



Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths
2023 Southeast Regional Workshop

Evaluation Summary

International Event Center, Rochester
Wednesday, May 3, 2023

Number of participants registered: 149

Number of participants registered plus walk-ins: 159

Total number of attendees (includes pre-registered plus walk-ins minus no-shows): 125

Number of Qualtrics evaluations complete: 44

Number of Exhibitors: 9

General Sessions	Average Rating (out of 4.00)
Welcome to 20 th Anniversary of TZD!	3.54
Traffic Safety Culture: TZD 2.0 updates & What are other states doing?	3.51
Crash Data Presentation: What's the data telling us?	3.10
Using Fatal Reviews and the Safe System Approach to Improve Intersection Safety	3.44

School Bus Stop Arm Camera Grant Program	3.51
Teaching Traffic Safety through Science	3.29
Focusing on What Matters	3.24
Cannabis DWIs... They're Not So Simple	3.33
Listening Session	3.00
What I Do Matters: Recognizing My Values within Our Workplace Communities	3.13
What's Your goal for 2023 and beyond?	3.58
Wrap Up	3.56

Arrangements	Average Rating (out of 4.00)
Convenience of the Registration Process	3.81
Location of the venue	3.83
Facilities were comfortable and appropriate	3.86
Food served for meals and breaks was satisfying	3.93
Electronic participant materials were helpful and useful	3.62
Exhibitors were informative	3.61

Comments about the general sessions.

- Overall fantastic! Great topics, activities, and information. Some of the presenters were hard to hear. Overall great engagement and the food was amazing!
- Great job!
- The information about cannabis was timely and very helpful!
- Include more non vehicle road and street users
- Great sessions
- I am representing bicyclists and pedestrians. I was very pleased to see the impact TZD has made over the past 20 years and how it is poised to make similar impacts on the safety of Active transportation modalities. Paul Claus, We Bike Rochester chapter of the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota.
- Thanks for all you do to put on these workshops.
- Great event center, great food and goodies at the table and door prizes!
- All very interesting topics. Interesting to hear the success of school bus grant program. Also about the advances in other countries traffic safety efforts and how to do more effective fatal reviews.
- Loved the interaction. Would like to have seen more talk about what we can work on next.
- Great job, Jess!

- Interesting to see what everyone else is doing around the country and countries. What should we be doing to catch up!?
- Should driver education be income-based or free for some? Might make us all safer on the roads!
- This conference was very well run and details were definitely a priority. Good job to all!

Please write any comments on the arrangements (registration, location, food, materials, and exhibitors)

- Venue, food, exhibitors, and presenters were all amazing.
- There is always a surplus of food. :)
- Food was great! Loved it all! Ample parking helpful.
- Food was exceptional. Very impressed with the venue and service.
- Felt good to be back together and interacting.
- Exhibitors were very informative. I learned a lot!
- Wished we could have gotten a calendar appointment after registering.

Do you have suggestions for topics you would like to see offered at future workshops?

- Excellent seminar
- As the laws change it would be nice to see more information on marijuana and efforts to keep everyone safe.
- Continued updates about cannabis if it gets passed
- Bike road safety.
- Car seats
- Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- More unique topics to traffic safety culture from other places. A session on what to look for in cannabis items.
- Public participation
- Compelling stories around data
- Plan discussion
- How to educate the public on the effects of cannabis! Keep showing us what others are doing along these lines or other innovative efforts.
- Let's revamp driver education in Minnesota. Review the curriculum, make it accessible for everyone.
- More communication materials on cannabis and how it affects drivers.
 1. Speed limits being raised in rural areas, results, related data
 2. Language barriers
 3. Illegal immigrants, licensing, difficulties with safety.
 4. New drivers, safety improvements, training
- More on child passenger safety.

What are your suggestions for building and maintaining support for this region's Minnesota TZD program?

- Keep doing public information sessions
- Keep a great mission, allow for expanded use of funding for local strategies, start working on cannabis and driving efforts, and build more traffic safety culture efforts.
- Get more involvement from local elected officials.
- Look for new stakeholder groups. Who can we add to the table? DVS and driver educators? Legislators?

- Continue outreach activities. These are so important and meaningful. How can others get involved, who is new to the traffic safety world can we get involved? It's great to interact with our group.
- Additional recruitment for attendees, surveys of awareness, interest, etc.
- More involvement from higher ranks of all Es and getting individuals at the state level involved.

Any other comments or suggestions are welcome

- A great day overall. Glad to see everyone interacting and willing to share
- All presenters were very informative! Thanks for a fantastic day! Good planning Jessica!"
- Thanks for making a tough topic (traffic deaths) part of an enjoyable, attainable, uplifting day. You all are appreciated!
- Many of us have to leave the meeting early, missing the last presentations. Maintenance personnel who drive from Faribault have to clock out at 3:30.

Community Engagement - Highlights

- **Safe City Nights**

TZD partnered with State Patrol to participate in five Rochester Police Department Safe City Nights.

Safe City Nights is a community engagement event that focuses on building positive connections between the community and law enforcement. Safe City Nights featured the State Patrol helicopter, demonstrations by the K9 team, hands-on experiences with the Emergency Response Unit, a tour of the crime scene vehicle, and many 4E

partnerships across the community. The Department of Public Safety's Deputy Commissioner Cassandra O'Hern and Director Hanson joined State Patrol troopers and the TZD regional coordinator at the booth at the July event. Nearly 1,000 community members and more than 20 agencies attended each of the Safe City Nights events.



- Thursdays Downtown**

TZD partnered with the Rochester Police Department to offer voluntary Preliminary Breath Testing (PBT) to community members at *Thursdays Downtown* in Rochester. More than 100 PBTs were administered at the event. This educational event gave community members the opportunity to see first-hand how alcohol affects their blood alcohol level. Thursdays Downtown combines arts, music, food, and a vendor market into one free, block party. Thousands of people from across the state attend the weekly event.



- **Rochester Police Department Youth Transportation Grant Activities**

The grant allowed the Rochester Police Department to host many youth events! The grant also enabled the department to give away bikes, t-shirts, helmets, and bike accessories. A few of the public engagement events included:

- Bike rodeos with the school district for summer programming and the Community Engagement Response Team.
- Community bike rides – some with the school district and some partnering with Bolder Options.
- Bike fix-it clinics.
- Walking school bus event.
- Held a bicycle course competition at the multiday state police explorer conference.
- Included local police explorers to set up and run a bike rodeo and have had them assist at rodeos.
- School-aged childcare presentations including 3-hour bicycle and pedestrian safety events.
- Safe City Night Scavenger Hunts.
- Seat Belt Challenges at three high schools.



- **Minnesota's Drivers License for All Education**

Rice County TZD Safe Roads Coalition partnered with the Faribault Education Center to offer question and answer sessions regarding the new Driver's License for All Law. The coalition also translated media materials in Spanish and Somalian for their communities. See links below.

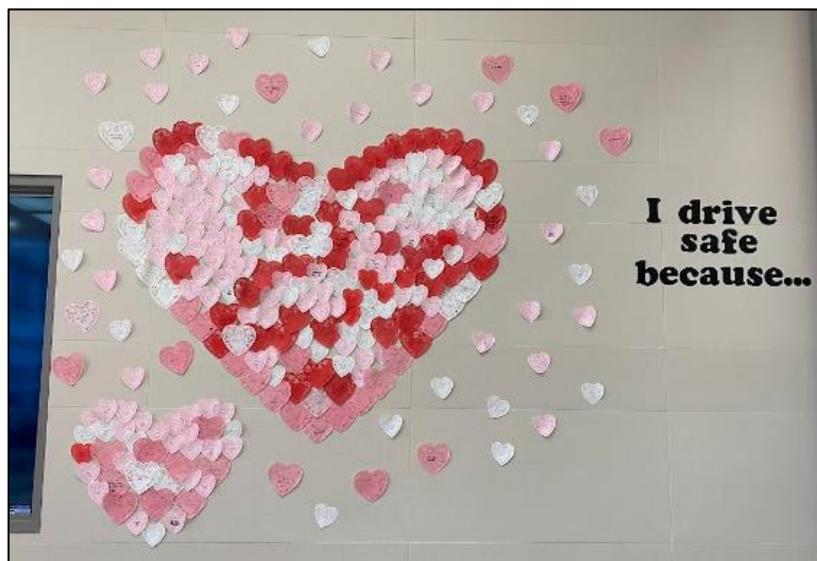
- [Drivers License For All - English](#)
- [Drivers License For All - Somali](#)
- [Drivers license For All - Spanish](#)

The [Driver's License For All](#) videos are now available in English, Spanish, Somali and Hmong.



- **I Drive Safe Because...**

Kasson-Mantorville High School students participated in a 2nd annual week-long traffic-safety education campaign focusing on “the reasons they drive safely”. The students wrapped up the week by writing their “reasons” on a paper heart which they used to form a larger heart.

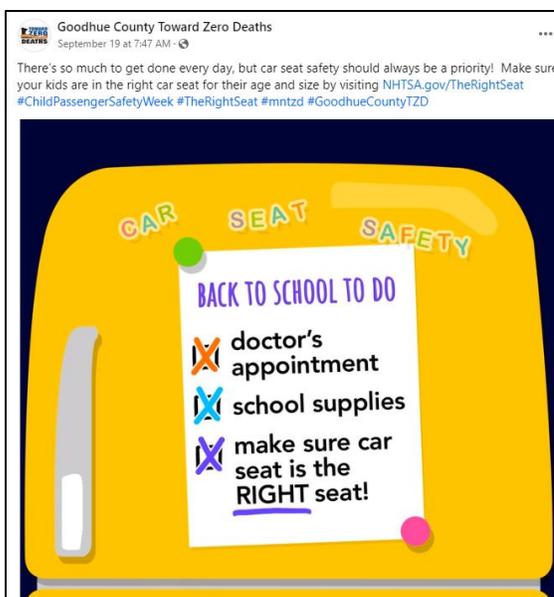
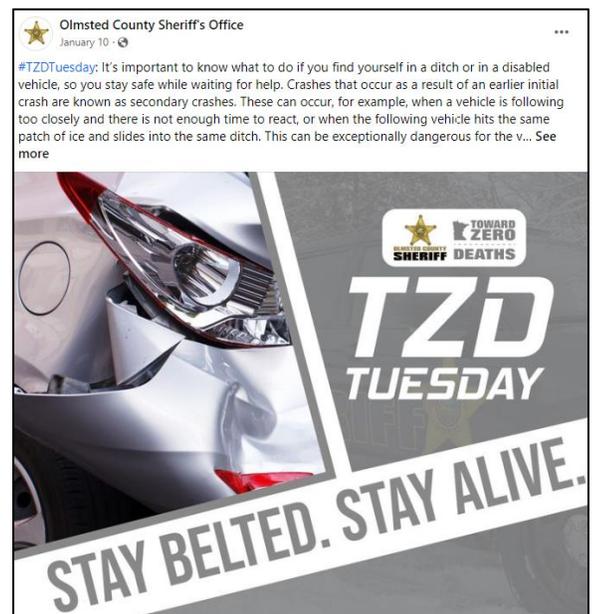


- **TZD Tuesday Messages**

TZD Tuesday kicked off Nov. 8, 2020. Partnered with the Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety and MnDOT District 6 Public Affairs to develop traffic safety messages for employers to send to employees each Tuesday. The short messages include information about various traffic-safety topics relevant to the week or month. The templates are distributed to regional coordinators to modify and distribute as they wish. Current active employers include MnDOT District 6, Dodge, Olmsted and Steele County, and the city of Rochester. The messages are also sent to the Steering Committee and Safe Roads coalitions to modify and use in their areas. The messages are also modified and used in social media posts for MnDOT District 6, the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office, as well as other local agencies and traffic safety stakeholders.

Just a few of the region's active social media pages to Like, Follow and Share!

- [Goodhue County Toward Zero Deaths](#)
- [Houston County Public Health](#)
- [Olmsted County Sheriff's Office](#)
- [Rice County Public Health](#)
- [Wabasha County Public Health](#)
- [Winona County Toward Zero Deaths](#)



- **Hayfield Mock Crash**

The Dodge County Sheriff's Office, Dodge County Emergency Management, State Patrol, Mayo One, TZD and Hayfield Fire volunteered their time to help educate the students. Matt Maas was the impact speaker. His son Logan was an unbelted 18-year-old passenger in a vehicle that left the roadway and rolled into the ditch on Dec. 18, 2015. Logan was ejected from the vehicle and died from injuries sustained in the crash. Media advisory was distributed.



- **Impact Speakers**

Impact Speakers were hosted at high schools across the region. Schools included: Medford High School, Kasson-Mantorville High School, Mayo High School, Plainview-Elgin-Millville High School and Wabasha-Kellogg High School.

Photos: The Dodge County TZD Safe Roads Coalition hosted an impact speaker at Kasson-Mantorville High School. Megan Pierce Campbell was 21 when she and a friend went bridge jumping at the Fillmore Bridge near Chatfield. After drinking with friends on a hot June day, they left the bridge unprepared for the events that would follow and forever alter their lives.



After crashing Megan's vehicle that day, multiple weeklong hospital stays and surgeries, a grueling emotional and physical recovery process, Megan is now a licensed lawyer who shares her story throughout Minnesota. Her story is titled In a Matter of Seconds and tells her story surviving one poor decision that led to grief and loss, perseverance, forgiveness, and redemption.

Regional Seat Belt Survey Results

The Southeast Minnesota TZD Steering Committee began collecting regional data beginning in 2006. DPS OTS evaluators set up a scientifically significant survey to show the regional trends in the area. The 2012-2023 results are shown below. As of April 2023, the seat belt compliance rate in southeast Minnesota was 89 percent. This is back to pre-pandemic (2019 = 89.0%) range. As a region, our long-term goal is to achieve 100 percent usage rate. Our short-term goal is to see a continuous increase in the usage rate each year.

2023 Southeast Seat Belt Survey

The 2023 observed seat belt usage in the Southeast Region was higher than in 2022. The recent survey added 15 sites and observed nearly the same number of occupants (6% fewer) resulting in a more precise estimate (i.e., a lower overall relative error).

Table 1: Observed Seat Belt Use across Southeast TZD Region

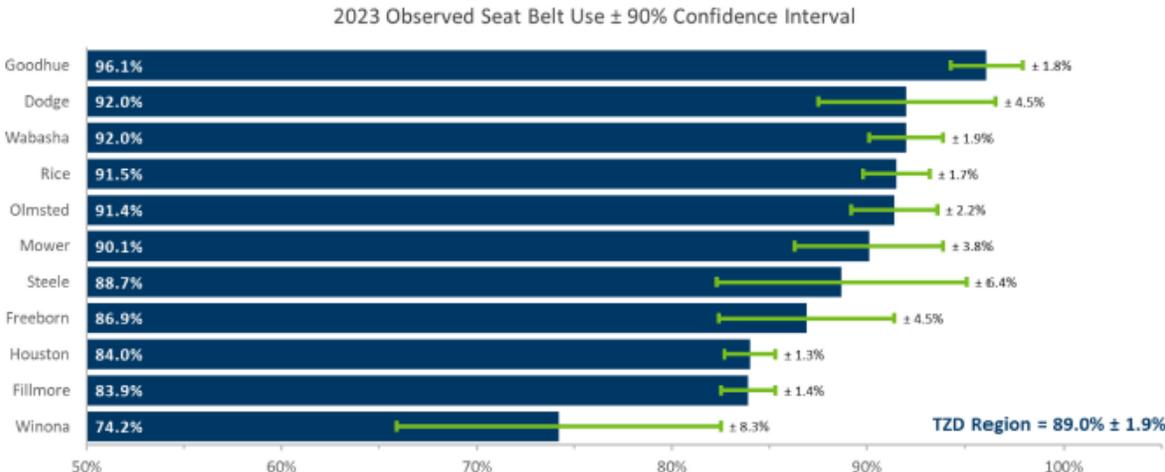
Year	Seat Belt Use Rate, %	Relative Error, %	Weighted Occupants
2023 Survey (n = 44)	89.0 ± 1.9	1.3	3,443
2022 Survey (n = 29)	86.4 ± 3.4	2.4	3,667

NOTE: Seat belt use reported with a 90% confidence band.

Results by County

Based on observed seat belt use and crash outcomes, six counties have the highest potential for additional seat belt programming: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, and Winona.

Figure 1: Observed Seat Belt Use by County



Variation is key to understanding any survey. Seat belt usage varies by community characteristics, consistency within the area, and observed traffic volumes. By adding observation sites, the survey reduced the confidence bounds to within 5.0% for 9 of the 11 counties.

Figure 2: Trend in Regional Observed Seat Belt Use, 2012 to 2023

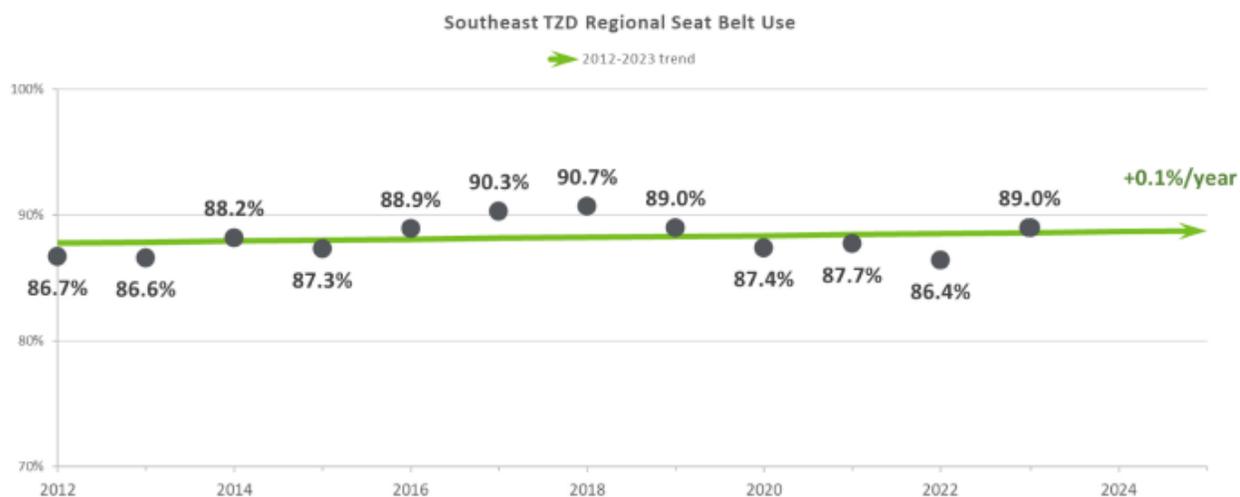


Table 2: 2023 Observed Seat Belt Use by County

County Name	Seat Belt Use Rate, %	Relative Error, %	Weighted Occupants
Dodge	92.0 ± 4.5	3.0	299
Fillmore	83.9 ± 1.4	1.0	282
Freeborn	86.9 ± 4.5	3.2	440
Goodhue	96.1 ± 1.8	1.1	353
Houston	84.0 ± 1.3	0.9	203
Mower	90.1 ± 3.8	2.6	520
Olmsted	91.4 ± 2.2	1.5	429
Rice	91.5 ± 1.7	1.1	134
Steele	88.7 ± 6.4	4.4	205
Wabasha	92.0 ± 1.9	1.3	370
Winona	74.2 ± 8.3	6.8	208

Regional Seat Belt Education Efforts

Seat belt efforts focused on partnering with law enforcement on a regional level with the various mobilizations, as well as educating citizens in southeast Minnesota using the Seat Belt Convincer. Focus for the upcoming year will continue with educational efforts, combined with law enforcement mobilizations, educating parents through driver education and worksites throughout the region.



- **Regional Seat Belt Challenges**

Students from across the region participated in a Regional Seat Belt Challenge to kick off the Seat Belt enforcement campaign. Students were timed on how quickly they could move to each seating position in a car and buckle up. Each school crowned a champion in early May.

Some of the participating schools included: Kasson-Mantorville High School, Triton High School, Hayfield High School, Medford High School, Mabel-Canton High School.



- **Seat Belt Convincer**

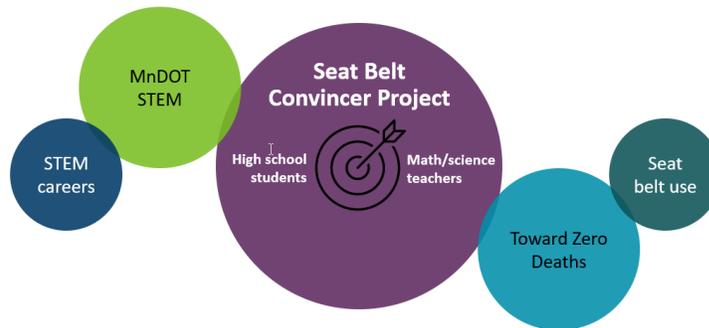
The Seat Belt Convincer was used at community events across the region to demonstrate the importance of seat belt use. The convincer enables a passenger to experience the actual force generated during a 5-10 mph crash. The convincer was used at events across the region, including:

- MnDOT District 6 Employee Meeting
- Albert Lea Wind Down Wednesday
- Pacelli High School
- Wabasha National Night Out
- Byron Good Neighbor Days
- Rice County Fair
- Goodhue County Fair
- Fillmore County – Mabel-Canton High School
- Red Wing Police Department Open House
- Steele County
- Stewartville High School



- **Seat Belt Convincer Curriculum**

Teaching Safety Through Physics



The Seat Belt Convincer curriculum was developed as a creative way for MnDOT/TZD to reach high school students across the region. The 20-minute curriculum uses Newton’s *Laws of Motion* to explain the physics of a crash and relate speed to force.

Newton’s 1st Law: An object in motion tends to stay in motion unless an external force acts upon it.
Newton’s 2nd Law: When a force acts on an object, it will cause the object to accelerate.

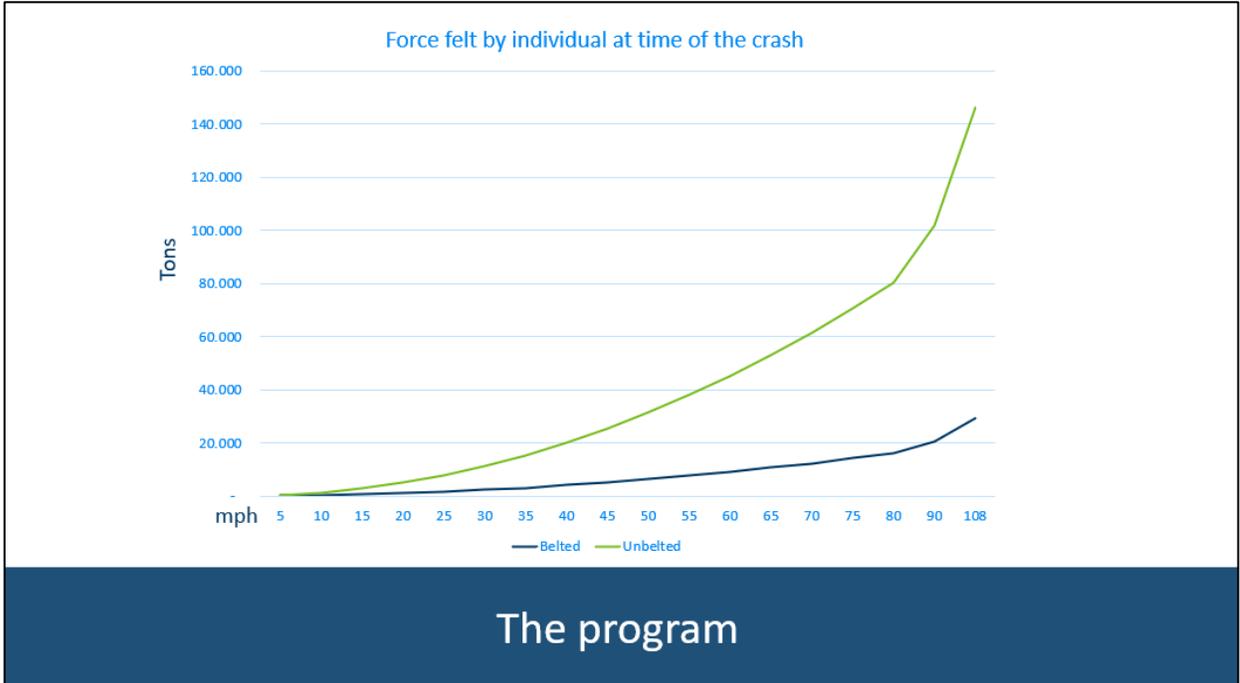
Example: When belted:

- Acceleration will slow, causing the top denominator increase.
- This will happen over a fraction of a second which increases the lower denominator.
- Overall, this causes the entire equation to reduce. Therefore, the force is lower.





Next, the students are given the opportunity to experience the force of a crash. After experiencing the convincer, the force of a crash at a variety of speeds is calculated. A personal safety message and a brief overview of a variety of relevant careers fields, including first responders and engineering wraps up the presentation. The curriculum was presented to three groups of teen drivers in the region.



Regional Distracted Driving Efforts

- ***Education and Public Engagement at Community Events***

Worked with regional Safe Roads coordinators to provide Distracted Driving education at regional high schools, businesses and community events. Educational activities including the distracted driving simulator, Wheel of Distraction and pledging to *Never Drive Distracted* were completed throughout the year. See distracted driving media coverage on pages 55-57.

- Wabasha County National Night Out
- Goodhue County Fair
- Dodge County Fair
- Thursdays Downtown – Rochester
- Safe City Nights – Rochester
- Rice County Fair
- Fillmore County – Mabel-Canton High School
- Austin High School



Regional Impaired Driving Education Efforts

Impaired driving media coverage on pages 48-54.

- **Voluntary Preliminary Breath Testing (PBT) Education – Olmsted County**

TZD partnered with the Rochester Police Department and Olmsted County Sheriff's Office to offer voluntary preliminary Breath Testing (PBT) education to community members at *Thursdays Downtown* in Rochester. See additional information on page 24.

- **Voluntary Preliminary Breath Testing (PBT) Education – Goodhue County**

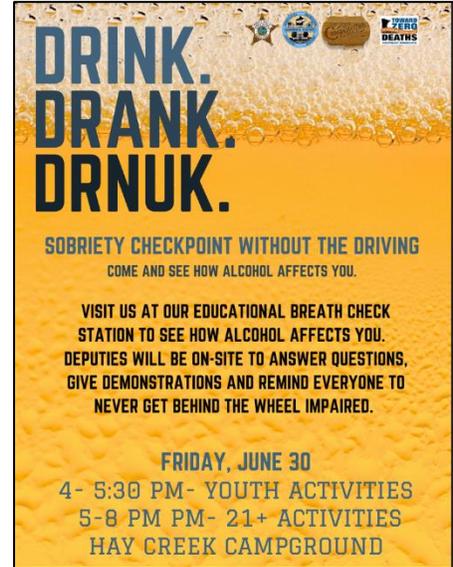
Goodhue County TZD partnered with the Goodhue County Sheriff's Office to offer voluntary PBT at a local campground. The event also included demonstrations and youth activities.

- **Voluntary Preliminary Breath Testing (PBT) Education – Dodge County**

The Kasson Police Department offered voluntary PBT education at Chaotic Good Brewery in Kasson on St. Patrick's Day.

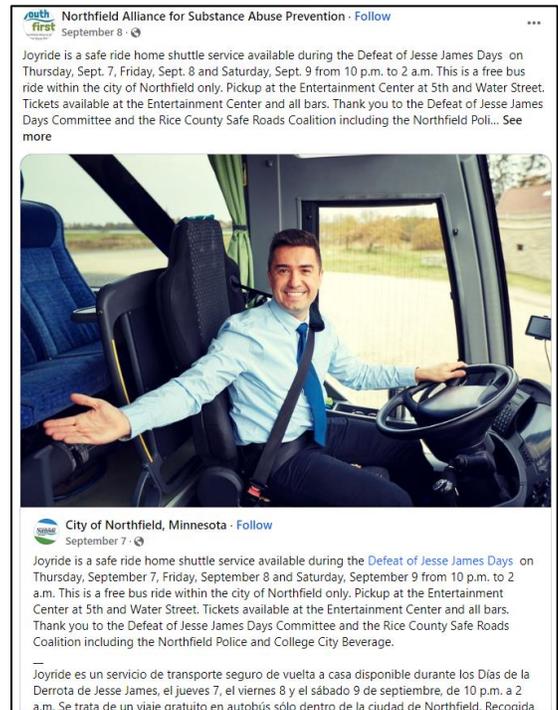
- **Impaired Driving – Winona County**

St. Charles Police Department partnered with the Winona County TZD Safe Roads Coalition to provide impaired driving education at the Night to Unite.



- **Joyride – Rice County**

The Rice County TZD Safe Roads Coalition partnered with Defeat of Jesse James Days Committee, Northfield Police and College City Beverage to organize JOYRIDE for the Defeat of Jesse James Days. The FREE Joyride safe ride home shuttle service was available on Thursday, Sept. 7, Friday, Sept. 8 and Saturday, Sept. 9 from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. within the city of Northfield. Tickets were available at the Entertainment Center and all liquor establishments.



- **Regional DWI Crash Car**

Coordinated the DWI crash car calendar. The car was used at numerous festivals and high schools across the region to remind the community of the dangers of driving impaired.

Kaitlyn Hanson was a 16-year-old Fillmore Central student who was killed January 28, 2016, when an impaired driver crossed the center line and hit her vehicle head-on. Investigators determined that the driver had a blood alcohol concentration between .08 and .151 percent and was driving between 85-to-95 miles per hour when the crash happened. Her parents donated her vehicle in hopes of educating the public of the dangers of driving impaired. It was displayed at the Blooming Prairie 4th of July parade, the Dodge County Fair, Kasson-Mantorville High School Homecoming parade, Medford High School, Owatonna Festival in the Park, Triton High School and the Pine Island High School.



- **Impaired Driving Education – Rice County**

The Rice County TZD Safe Roads Coalition hosted impaired driving educational activities at the Rice County Fair. The Faribault Police Explorers led local teens in a game of cornhole. The teens attempted to toss beanbags while wearing “drunk Goggles”.

- **Responsible Beverage Service Training**

There are currently 31 Responsible Beverage Service Training (RBST) trainers in the region. At least one training was held in almost every county across the region this year. The [Rice County Chemical & Mental Health Coalition](#) even offers the training on demand!



Pedestrian Safety Education Highlights

- **Safety Town – Steele County**

The Owatonna Police Department partnered with McKinley Elementary School to host Safety Camp featuring Safety Town.

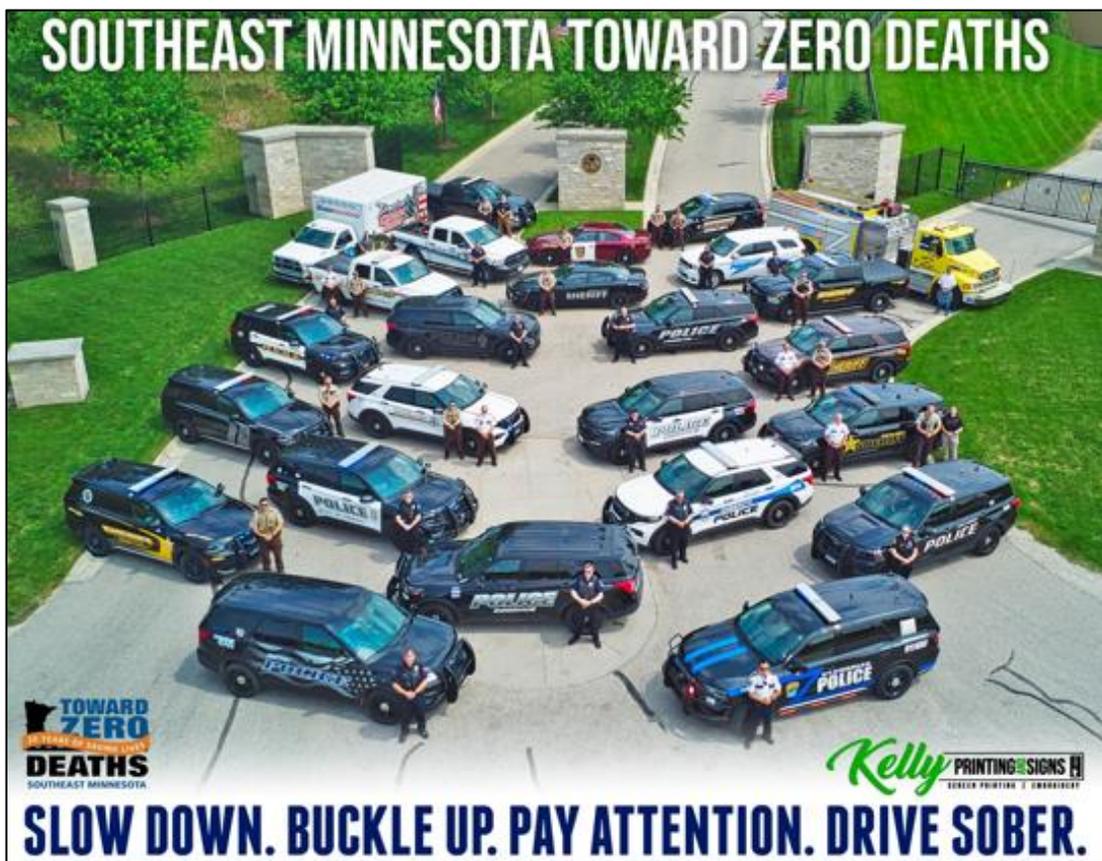


Regional Speed Efforts

Speed-related media coverage on pages 66-68.

- **Annual Speed Poster**

- Once a year, regional traffic safety stakeholders pose for a regional Speed photo to use with local news releases to distribute in their communities. In previous years, the event has been held in Lanesboro, Northfield, Owatonna, Red Wing, Rochester, Winona, Kasson, Lake City, Albert Lea, Austin, Rochester, Owatonna, Winona, Zumbrota, Mantorville, and most recently in Preston. The photo shoot is used to recognize the 4Es. TZD uses an interdisciplinary approach pairing education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma services. This photo has occurred for many years and has rotated through the 11 counties. This group has expanded to include other “E”s such as ambulance, snowplows, and sometimes crash cars to show the unity of TZD and that we all work together. The poster helps to show the partnership, and more importantly, helps with relationship building amongst the groups. More than 300 Speed posters were developed and distributed across the region. The Olmsted County Sheriff’s Office developed a video for social media focused on the [annual SE TZD Seat Belt Enforcement](#) event reached more than 6,000 people and was viewed nearly 4,000 times.



Veterans Memorial, Preston MN

- **Border-to-Border Speed Saturation**

The 7th Annual Border-to-Border multiagency Speed saturation was coordinated along Highway 14 through five southeast counties on July 7, 2023. This was the second year that Highway 19 agencies also participated in a simultaneous B2B saturation. Southeast TZD partnered with the Southern Minnesota Law Enforcement Liaison and local law enforcement to incorporate regional educational outreach. A media advisory with information regarding the saturation was distributed prior to the event as well as a news release following the event. Electronic messaging boards were deployed displaying the enforcement message. See photo below.



Results of the Multiagency Speed Enforcement Saturation

Traffic Stops – 677 (645 last yr.)
 Speed Citations – 252 (163 last yr.)
 Speed Warnings – 394 (379 last yr.)
 Speeds at 100 plus – 3 (1 last yr.)

Region	Stops	Speed Citations	Warnings
SE Minnesota	274	131	152
SC Minnesota	212	67	106
SW Minnesota	141	33	107
Metro	50	21	29

Participating SE Law Enforcement Agencies:

MSP D2100 Rochester, Northfield Police Department, Red Wing Police Department, Rice County Sheriff’s Office, Lonsdale Police Department, Zumbrota Police Department, Dodge County Sheriff’s Office, Owatonna Police Department, Faribault Police Department, Belle Plaine Police Department, Olmsted County Sheriff’s Office, Steele County Sheriff’s Office, Winona County Sheriff’s Office, Wabasha Police Department, Wabasha County Sheriff’s Office, Kasson Police Department, Rochester Police Department



- **Statewide Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)
Speed Action Team**

I am co-chairing the Statewide Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Speed action team, along with Lisa Kons from the Minnesota Safety Council. The team is made up of a variety of state, county, and city representatives, from each of the 4 Es as well as community groups from across the state.

The primary objectives of the committee are to use the SHSP to develop an implementation plan for the strategies and tactics in the SHSP and to look outside the box for additional approaches to curb the spiking speeding epidemic. We also determined that we need to understand available data related to speeding, identify data needs, and then work to explore opportunities for new data sources. We would then share what we learned with those that can benefit from it.

We began developing the roster in December 2020 and held our first meeting in March 2021. Our meetings included high-level discussions of priorities which ultimately resulted in “Collaborative Messaging” becoming the focus of the team. The goal of the team is to develop a statewide strategic Speed Plan.

The SHSP Speed Action Team determined that the need for updated Speed research is critical, as the research would help guide statewide strategic communications efforts and the development of a statewide strategic Speed Plan. The Toward Zero Deaths program, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Minnesota Department of Health and the Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety have been working collaborating on this project.

The team used an RFP process to develop a scope of work to be used in securing a research consultant. The consultant was secured after a lengthy evaluation process and the Minnesota Speeding Behavior Research Study began September 15, 2022.

The consultants designed and implemented a statewide speed/high risk driver survey with the goal of learning more about the motivations and circumstances that contribute to risky driving behavior (speeding) as well as identify the motivations and circumstances that contribute to safe driving behavior. The planning group met with the consultants weekly for progress updates.

The study was conducted in two stages. First, a survey was sent out to a representative sample of Minnesota residents. From the quantitative results of the survey, respondents were chosen to participate in one of three focus groups intended to provide information about risky driving behaviors and effective messaging strategies. The study concluded September 2023. The final report included data regarding risky drivers, perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors surrounding risky driving, the impacts of driver assist apps on driver behavior, and perceptions of messages and ad campaigns aimed at reducing risky driving behaviors. Communication recommendations will be released at the 2023 Statewide TZD Conference.

The Action Team will continue to assist and support the development of a statewide communications strategy. This is a collaborative effort across many agencies.

Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) and Improvements to Roadway Design Process scored high on the list of priorities. After discussion, it was determined that subcommittees focusing on additional areas would benefit the team because both should be included as part of a comprehensive strategic speed management plan.

The Speed Safety Camera (formerly ASE) subcommittee researched the effectiveness of safety cameras in states that are currently using the technology. The committee discussed potential obstacles to implementation and upcoming legislation. The subcommittee last met in November 2022 to discuss upcoming legislation.

The Improvement to Roadway Design Process subcommittee focused on education and awareness of engineering fundamentals to reduce speeding on rural roadways.

The Improvement to URBAN Roadway Design Process subcommittee focused on education and awareness of engineering fundamentals to reduce speeding on URBAN roadways.

- **Statewide Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Traffic-Safety Culture Action Team**

The regional TZD coordinators partnered to form a Traffic-Safety Culture Action Team. The team focuses on developing traffic-safety toolkits with an emphasis on positive social norming and traffic-safety culture change.

To assist with the statewide ATV/UTV safety education effort, the TZD regional coordinators collaborated with MN DNR to discuss, develop, and distribute key safety messaging regarding ATV use, focusing on ATV interaction with road right of way. The goal of this project was to use these partnerships to bring ATV/UTV education to communities across the state. The DNR developed messages/social media posts with corresponding photos that could be shared on social media, in newsletters, emails across the state.



- **Vehicle Speed Feedback Project**

The Southeast region has been working on a pilot project since 2019 to determine if digital Vehicle Feedback Signs change behavior. The signs collect data allowing us to analyze driver behavior. We use local data to determine locations that were seeing high-speeds and then deploy Vehicle Speed Feedback signs to record speeds at those locations. The signs were

installed in “stealth” mode for two weeks to get a baseline of speeds, then lit the signs to show drivers their speeds for two weeks. The signs were then put into “stealth” mode again

for two weeks. We were able to run reports to show if the system changed short and/or long-term behavior. The reports showed that there was a significant decrease in speeds when drivers receive feedback.

The signs also give LE a tool to combat speeds as the report can pinpoint the time of day and day of week that speeding is occurring. The data generated could also potentially help to slow drivers down with changes in roadway design.

Feedback signs have been placed in the counties of Rice and Houston in 2023. The coalitions plan to use the data to develop action plans to assist with enforcement efforts, engineering challenges, and education within their communities.

Next Steps:

Purchase additional feedback signs to enable the researchers to analyze additional data throughout the region.



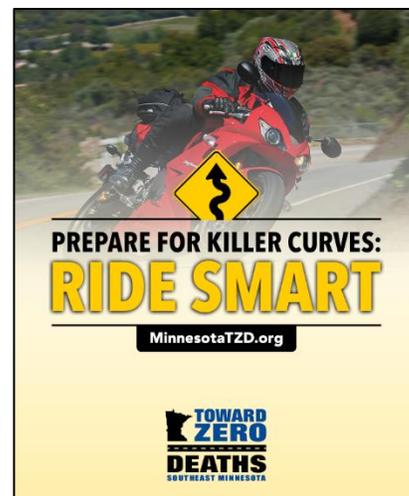
Regional Motorcycle Safety Efforts

- ***Veteran’s Motorcycle Rally - Kasson***

Organized motorcycle safety education for a rally/run that crosses much of the southeast region. The Dodge County Sheriff and local Law Enforcement representatives were there to answer questions and distribute information on motorcycle safety and rider training.

- ***Motorcycle Yard Signs and Banners***

SE TZD Safe Roads coordinators partnered with the Office of Traffic Safety, Minnesota Safety Council, AA and MnDOT District 6 to develop motorcycle safety graphics and messaging for yard signs and banners. They were displayed in seven counties including Dodge, Fillmore, Houston, Rice, Wabasha, Winona and Olmsted County.



- **Motorcycle Safety – Spring and Fall Flood Run**

Partnered with Wabasha County TZD Safe Roads and MnDOT District 6 to deploy changeable message boards at the start of the “Flood Run” motorcycle route as a reminder to ride smart. The messages were deployed in April and September in Zumbro Falls.



Motorcycle Safety - Social Media Highlights

Wabasha County Public Health
October 10 at 9:01 AM · 🌐

TZD Tuesday - Deer vs. Motorcycle

Minnesota’s large deer population makes them a safety hazard on the road all year long, but deer-vehicle crashes peak in the autumn months. Although all motorists need to be extra cautious as the weather cools down, deer crashes can be especially dangerous for motorcyclists — a group which accounted for 23 of the 27 vehicle-deer related deaths from 2016-2022.

Deer are unpredictable – they stop in the middle of the road, they cross and quick... See more

Olmsted County Sheriff's Office
September 11 · 🌐

#MessageMonday: Bikers love attention. Notice them.
#TowardZeroDeaths
#OlmstedCounty

Goodhue County Toward Zero Deaths
May 2 · 🌐

This week marks the start of Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month. The weather is warming up and soon there'll be more motorcyclists out enjoying the ride! This makes it the perfect time to remind all motorists that riders and drivers need to work together to share the road. Safe driving and riding practices from all road users will help keep motorists and riders safe.

Preliminary reports show that 82 motorcyclists were killed on Minnesota roadways in 2022. We all have the pow... See more

Region Goal 2 – TZD Partnership Goals

To continuously increase TZD awareness and partnerships across southeast Minnesota for both the public and traffic safety professionals.

Building Relationships within the Region

Relationships continue to be reinforced and formed through traffic safety advocates participating in the monthly Steering Committee meetings, regional activities and the annual Southeast Minnesota TZD annual workshop.

Although this is not quantitative data analysis, the Steering Committee stakeholders believe that all the regional initiatives are successful because of the networking/connections that have been made in the region as well as statewide.

Building Relationships – TZD Website

Efforts were made to ensure that all Southeast Minnesota TZD workshop materials, presentations, crash maps and media stories were updated on the regional website.

Building Relationships – Southeast Minnesota TZD end-of-year report

In addition to creating the end-of-year report for grant purposes, the regional report is also distributed to all the district's state and federal legislators in the MnDOT District 6 Legislative Report. The District Engineer meets annually with all legislators and the TZD report is included in this discussion and booklet. The end-of-year report is also posted online and distributed to the Southeast Minnesota Steering Committee.

Building internal and external relationships:

- Participated in TZD enforcement award presentations as able.
- Participated in the Impact Teen Driver Training.
- Participated in the quarterly TZD Hotdish.
- Participated in TZD Leadership meetings.
- Bi-monthly Steering Committee meetings.
- Participation in quarterly regional Fatal and Serious Injury Review committees.
- Facilitated Dodge, Mower and Steele County meetings.
- Participation in bi-monthly regional TZD Safe Roads coalition meetings.
- Facilitated Dodge, Mower and Steele County meetings.
- Hosted quarterly TZD Safe Roads coordinator meetings for all Southeast TZD Safe Roads coordinators.
- Attend Southern Minnesota Regional Trauma Advisory (SMRTAC) meetings when possible.
- TZD vision, mission, goals presentation to county boards throughout the region.
- Continued to participate in the statewide motorcycle Safety team.



- Continued to participate in the MN Child Passenger Safety Advisory Task Force as able.
- Continued to participate in the MN Traffic-Safety Culture Advisory Task Force.
- Participated in the High Priority Pedestrian Safety Improvement Planning work group.
- Participated in the District 6 High Priority Pedestrian Safety Improvement Planning (HiPPS) work group.
- Participated in the Lifesavers conference in Seattle.
- Participated in virtual conference sessions from FHWA, Utah, AASHTO, and GHSA.



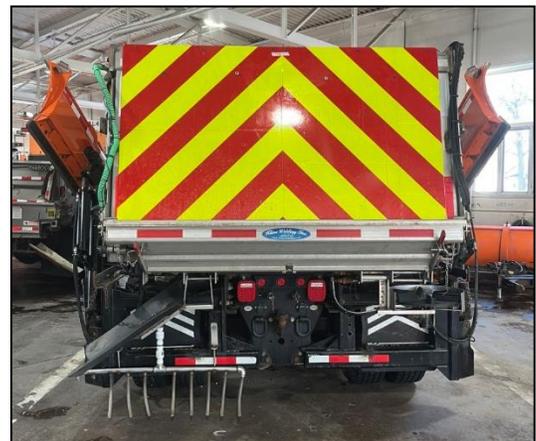
Region Goal 2 – TZD Partnership Goals

Engineering

Low cost, high benefit engineering safety improvements continue on both state and local roadways. The district and each county are implementing safety plans to further reduce crashes. Although many factors affect traffic-related fatalities including the economy, driver behavior and weather the fact remains that many traffic safety professionals continue to look at proactive and systematic ways to reduce fatalities and serious injuries due to crashes.

County engineers continue to implement safety projects that were identified in the county highway safety plans. District 6 county engineers are collaborating and applying for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) grants together to make roadway improvements proactively and systematically. The direction was to identify low cost, high benefit safety initiatives, e.g. rumble strips/rumble stripes, curve delineation, improved edge lines, intersection lighting and intersection signing improvements on the county system.

Technology is an important tool in improving safety. It's not the only tool, but it's one that provides additional ways to look at keeping workers and motorists safe.



*Photo to the right is a inexpensive safety improvement project that was implemented in District 6 winter 2022. The reflective was put in place to alert drivers of the snowplow on the roadway in hopes of decreasing snowplow/vehicle crashes. In 2021 there were six snowplow hits on I-35. In 2022, that number was ZERO!

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Projects – 2023

Project Description	Project Cost
Olmsted County Install cable median barrier along Hwy 14 from Byron to Rochester CSAH 34 to US 52	\$1,997,390
Olmsted County Install cable median barrier along I90 from I35 to CSAH Hwy 46	\$1,722,284

Building Internal and External Relationships – Engineering

- Was actively involved in Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) discussion.
- Continued to represent TZD in the Highway 52 Goodhue County Improvement Planning Project. Project completed November 2022.
- Worked with county engineers to determine locations for driver feedback signs.
- Worked with county engineers to establish new locations for the annual observational seat belt surveys.
- Served as a resource to all city, county and state engineers as requested.



MINNESOTA TOWARD ZERO DEATHS

Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths

Media Advisory

May 1, 2023

Contact: Jessica Schleck

Southeast Minnesota TZD Regional Coordinator

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Southeast Minnesota's Toward Zero Deaths workshop recognizes 20 years of saving lives

TZD efforts have helped reduce traffic deaths more than one third; traffic safety partners pursue next steps

What: The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths regional workshop partners will discuss crash trends and determine best practices for reducing traffic deaths and serious injuries on southeast Minnesota roadways.

When: Wednesday, May 3, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where: International Event Center
7333 Airport View Drive SW, Rochester

Why: Traffic-related deaths have declined by 33 percent since TZD's inception in 2003. Tragically, traffic deaths began to rise during COVID-19, with speed as the largest contributing factor. Reevaluating and revising focus and strategy are needed to bring us closer to zero.

Who: Nearly 150 regional traffic safety stakeholders representing law enforcement, engineering, education, emergency medical and trauma services as well as local leaders will attend the workshop. It's hosted by the Minnesota departments of Health, Public Safety and Transportation.

Highlights:

9:30 a.m. – Crash Data Presentation: What's the data telling us?

Mark Wagner, assistant state traffic safety engineer, MnDOT Office of Traffic Engineering

Recent trends in traffic fatalities and serious injuries statewide are concerning. Were the past years a brief spike or are we seeing a new trajectory?

10:45 a.m. – Teaching Traffic Safety through Science

Cindy Morgan, MnDOT public engagement coordinator, MnDOT District 6

MnDOT is working with TZD partners to teach traffic safety through science. This program uses the seat belt convincer, a front-end crash simulator, to introduce the physics behind the crash.

2 p.m. – Cannabis DWIs: They're Not So Simple

Sgt. Tyler Milless, DRE coordinator, Minnesota State Patrol

With the rise in cannabis use in Minnesota and the potential of legalization, it is important to know how this could affect traffic safety on Minnesota roadways.

*Please review the entire [SE TZD regional workshop agenda](#) for additional sessions.

###



Star Award Media Coverage

KAAL – TV

10.14.2022

Olmsted County Sheriff among those honored in traffic safety awards

Link: [Olmsted County sheriff among those honored in traffic safety awards - ABC 6 News - kaaltv.com](https://www.abc6news.com/story/news/local/2022/10/12/olmsted-county-sheriff-among-those-honored-in-traffic-safety-awards/7041117002/)

The Olmsted County sheriff was recognized as a leader in Minnesota traffic safety Wednesday. Sheriff [Kevin Torgerson](#) received the Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Distinguished Public Leadership Award for Greater Minnesota at the 2022 conference Oct. 12.

All award-winners were recognized for efforts to reduce the number of traffic deaths and injuries in Minnesota. A summary of all 2022 TZD Awards presented on Oct. 12 is listed below. More details on each award, along with more information and photos of each award winner, can found on the [2022 TZD Awards website](#).

Twin Cities Metro area winners

- TZD Kathy Swanson Outstanding Service Award – Dakota County Traffic Engineer Kristi Sebastian
- TZD Distinguished Public Leadership Award (Twin Cities Metro area) – Chief Jeff Tate, Shakopee Police Department
- TZD Media Award – Boyd Huppert, KARE-11 television journalist
- TZD Traffic Safety Innovation Award – Richfield Police Department
- TZD Child Passenger Safety Star Award – Officer Ryan Kuffel, Eden Prairie Police Department
- TZD Engineering Star Award – State Traffic Safety Engineer Derek Leuer, MnDOT

Greater Minnesota winners

- TZD Distinguished Public Leadership Award (Greater Minnesota) – Sheriff Kevin Torgerson, Olmsted County Sheriff's Office
- TZD Emerging Leader Award – Ava Chen, Kylie Karsky and Molly McCloud, 2021 interns for the Shreya R. Dixit Foundation
- TZD Emerging Leader Award – Princeton High School SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) Organization
- TZD Emergency and Trauma Services Star Award – Flight Paramedic Josh Duda, North Memorial Health Air Care, Brainerd
- TZD Enforcement Star Award – Deputy Chad Myers, Winona County Sheriff's Office
- TZD Education Star Award – TZD Coalition Coordinator Mary Erickson, Renville County

Learn more about TZD or how to get involved at www.minnesotatzd.org.

Impaired Driving Media Coverage

KIMT – TV

11.22.2022

How to plan for safe, sober travel this holiday weekend

By: Alec Oas



Link: [How to plan for safe, sober travel this holiday weekend | News | kimt.com](https://www.kimt.com/news/2022/11/22/how-to-plan-for-safe-sober-travel-this-holiday-weekend/)

ROCHESTER, Minn. - Minnesota State Patrol wants to remind community members of the importance of safe and sober driving while traveling during the holidays.

A major factor in accidents on the roadways this time of year is impaired driving - whether under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

While it's alright to celebrate and enjoy yourself during the holidays, it's advised to plan for a sober ride. This means following the "if you feel different, you'll drive different" motto and staying mindful that buzzed driving is still impaired driving - even if you are under the legal blood alcohol concentration limit. Also, it is helpful to designate a driver for the night or weekend that will ensure you are able to get to your next destination without causing property damage, injuries, and citations.

"Typically we'll see an increase in DWI arrests as well as traffic crashes, and that just goes along with higher traffic volume," said Sgt. Troy Christianson of Minnesota State Patrol. "It's important that motorists do allow enough time to get where they're going safely, and that you're paying attention."

Sgt. Christianson also reminds us the importance of simply buckling up, or making sure your restraints are properly secure in the event of an incident on the road.

While it may seem simple, following these tips and abiding by the laws are surefire ways to make it through the holidays in one piece.

KAAL – TV

12.14.2022

Concerns grow over impaired driving ahead of holiday season

By: Mayzie Olson



Link: [Concerns grow over impaired driving ahead of holiday season - ABC 6 News - kaaltv.com](https://www.kaaltv.com/news/2022/12/29/concerns-grow-over-impaired-driving-ahead-of-holiday-season-abc-6-news-kaaltv.com)

(ABC 6 News) New data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has many public safety and law enforcement officials worried ahead of the holiday season. This new study shows that 54% of the people injured or killed in traffic crashes had one or more drugs, or alcohol, in their bloodstreams.

Since the pandemic, experts say drivers have become more reckless, having a deadly effect on Minnesota roads. "It's some kind of weird COVID effect, I guess, that brought it on," said Olmsted County Sheriff Kevin Torgerson. "People were isolated in many ways and then they got out on the highways and there was less traffic, so they went faster and took more risks."

This year so far, there have been 425 deadly crashes in Minnesota, and 28% of these crashes had alcohol as a contributing factor. Those numbers are similar in southeast Minnesota, with about 24% of all traffic deaths being alcohol or drug-related. "During the course of crashes and incidents in Mower County, we are seeing an uptick in controlled substance DUIs and also alcohol-related DUIs and fatalities," said Mower County Chief Deputy Mark May.

Just over the county line, Freeborn County Sheriff Kurt Freitag says a majority of crashes are due to speeding and that they have not noticed an increase in impaired driving. State officials agree the deadliest threat on the roads is due to people going too fast. "This year, although speed continues to be the highest contributing factor, we are seeing our roadway deaths going down compared to last year," said Kristine Hernandez, the Toward Zero Death program coordinator with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. "But if you look pre-pandemic, we're still trending higher for death overall." Law enforcement officials say with the holidays around the corner, it is more important than ever to drive safe, drive slow, and drive sober.

"One of the things that people can do around the holidays is talking to your family and friends about safe driving habits," added Hernandez. "That does go a long way. We need to help change the culture around safe driving" A national DWI extra enforcement campaign kicked off the first weekend of December and runs through Jan. 1. Local law enforcement will provide extra patrols to keep impaired drivers off the road this holiday season.

KAAL – TV

12.29.2022

Drive sober or get pulled over this NYE weekend

By: Mayzie Olson



Link: [Drive sober or get pulled over this NYE weekend - ABC 6 News - kaaltv.com](https://www.kaaltv.com/news/2022/12/28/drive-sober-or-get-pulled-over-this-nye-weekend-abc-6-news/)

(ABC 6 News) – This year is coming to a close and people all over the world are joining in on the New Year’s Eve celebrations, but one bad decision and these good times can turn deadly.

In the last five years, there were 620 drunk driving-related deaths in Minnesota alone. According to the Minnesota State Patrol, it is not just alcohol that is making the roads dangerous, it is also drugged driving. Drugged driving accounted for 6,941 DWI incidents from 2012-2016 compared with 15,747 from 2017-2021 – a 227% increase. The weeks between the day before Thanksgiving through Dec. 31 are some of the most dangerous times to be on the roads. Over the last five years, there were more than 12,000 DWI’s between these holiday months, and this year it may be even worse.

“This year we’ve seen an increase in DWI and drugged driving compared to last year. It’s a significant increase,” explained Sgt. Troy Christianson with the MSP. This weekend, law enforcement will have extra troopers monitoring the roads and keeping them clear of impaired drivers. “We just need to make sure people are aware of the dangers. If they do consume any alcohol or drugs, they are aware of the consequences,” added Sgt. Christianson. “You’re not only jeopardizing your life, but everyone else on the roadways as well.”

Instead of getting behind the wheel, find a sober ride: family members, friends, cabs, or rideshare companies can all be good options. One rideshare company in Rochester, ‘Double D’s Designated Drivers’, says this is their busiest time of year. Companies like this will get you and your car home safely. “It’s hectic and insane. We will have cars ready to go by about 5 o’clock [on New Year’s Eve],” explained DD’s owner, Darlene Krebs. A similar service is Safe Ridez.

“It’s time for family and friends, it’s time for celebrations, but it’s also time to think about those you’re gonna be around and lets be safe and lets make a plan,” said Peter Bartz, the owner and operator of Safe Ridez. More information on how to schedule a ride this weekend, or any weekend, is below.

KIMT – TV

12.31.2022

Drive sober or get pulled over on NYE

By: Samantha Soto



Link: [Drive sober or get pulled over on NYE | News | kimt.com](https://www.kimt.com/news/drive-sober-or-get-pulled-over-on-nye)

ROCHESTER, Minn. - It's new year's weekend and with that can come danger. Each year, poor choices get made, creating a horrible start to the new year, when people choose to not drive sober. In the last five years, there were 620 drunk driving-related deaths in Minnesota alone.

Driving under the influence of drugs is also a growing concern for Minnesota law enforcement. "It doesn't matter if you're impaired on alcohol drugs or both... make people impaired when you're impaired drive differently, act differently, and you're endangering yourself and other people on the roadways," says Sgt. Troy Christianson with the Minnesota State Patrol.

If you are drinking and thinking about getting behind the wheel find a sober ride. Designated driver service '[Safe Ridez](#)' in Rochester drives both you and your car home. The owner says the holidays are a busy time for ride share companies like theirs. "It's gonna be crazy people are going to be frantically calling in need of rides and I hope we can get to them all," says Peter Bartz.

The weeks between the day before Thanksgiving through December 31 are some of the most dangerous times to be on the roads. Over just the last five years, there have been more than 12,000 DWI arrests between the two holidays. "We want to see everyone home safe with their families. That's really important, and certainly for those people that have had a tragedy like that, understand that being impaired on the road is a dangerous thing," Bartz adds.

This weekend Minnesota State Patrol will have extra enforcement on the roads cracking down on DWIs. "Not only are you endangering yourself but everybody on the roadway. We want to make sure everyone stays safe this weekend, gets home, and enjoys the new year. It's a great way to start it out by making sure everyone's safe," says Christianson.

Safe Ridez in Rochester will take you and vehicle anywhere in town for \$25. Different rate apply for out of town. Call (507) 990-9797 to schedule a ride.

KIMT – TV

02.09.23

Drinking and driving? That's a major fumble!

By: Alex Dederer

Many local law enforcement agencies are having extra troopers on the roads Sunday night to keep an eye out for drunk drivers, including the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota and Iowa State Patrol.

St. Patrick's Day Media Coverage

KIMT – TV

03.17.2023

Don't push your luck: drive sober!

By: Alex Dederer



Link: [Don't push your luck: drive sober! | News | kimt.com](https://www.kimt.com/news/dont-push-your-luck-drive-sober/)

MINNESOTA - This St. Patrick's day, the Minnesota State Patrol is reminding you to not push your luck. Today is one of the top five holidays for most fatal crashes and DWI arrests.

Between 2016 and 2020, almost 300 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes over St. Patrick's day, that's according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Last year, Minnesota had 176 DWI arrests just on St. Patrick's day. To put that into perspective - on a normal day, state patrol averages 71 DWI arrests.

Sgt. Troy Christianson with the Minnesota State Patrol said because the holiday falls on a Friday and people don't have to work tomorrow, the state patrol is anticipating more people out and on the roads - and warning people of risks of driving under the influence.

"One risk is being arrested - but that's probably the best risk if you are under the influence of alcohol or any type of controlled drugs. But, it costs thousands of dollars. It just depends on the degree the DWI is. Also - if you're involved in a fatal crash or a serious injury crash, then the charges will go up significantly more. Not only a danger to yourself, but other people on the roadway," said Sgt. Christianson. Plan for a sober ride before you even go out. If you see any cars on the road that are driving unsafely, call 9-1-1.

Distracted Driving Media Coverage

KIMT – TV

04.04.2023

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month

By: Alec Oas



Link: https://www.kimt.com/news/april-is-distracted-driving-awareness-month/article_f40f9db6-d2fe-11ed-adbc-3bea1d1b7377.html

ROCHESTER, Minn. - April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, a time to recognize the importance of remaining focused on driving without added distractions to promote public safety while on the roadways. According to the Minnesota State Patrol, in 2022 there were 22 deaths due to distracted driving. Overall, distracted driving amounted to 9% of all crashes in the state of Minnesota.

"We estimate one in four fatal crashes in the state of Minnesota is related to distracted driving, and that's probably estimated fairly low just because it's hard to determine if a distraction was the primary cause of a fatal crash," said Sgt. Troy Christianson of Minnesota State Patrol. There will be additional patrols on the roadways from April 1 to April 30 to address distracted driving violations.

"Law enforcement officers will be looking for people on their phones or just other distractions, so if we see people weaving within their lane, then they can be stopped and cited," Christianson said. Under state law, drivers cannot hold their cell phones while driving and must use single-touch activation, voice commands, and mounts to make calls, send texts, change music, or use navigation.

While many think of handling cell phones when it comes to distracted driving, this isn't always the case. "We see all sorts of distracted driving, so we see people eating, reading a map - we're just so used to multi-tasking, that it's important that people to just focus on driving," Christianson said. The first time

offense for violating hands-free laws can carry fees of over \$100 once court fees are added, and a second violation can cost upwards of \$380. Between 2018 and 2022, a total of 144 deaths and 778 serious injuries during accidents were caused by distracted driving, according to State Patrol.

KAAL -TV

04.05.2023

Extra enforcement of texting and driving law on Minnesota roads in April



Link: [Extra enforcement of texting and driving law on Minnesota roads in April - ABC 6 News - kaaltv.com](https://www.kaaltv.com/news/extra-enforcement-of-texting-and-driving-law-on-minnesota-roads-in-april-abc-6-news-kaaltv.com) (ABC 6 News) – Hands free means hands free – except for the steering wheel – when driving.

Drivers across Minnesota will see increased enforcement of the state's "hands free" law in April. Distracted driving is as great of a concern as impaired driving and speeding, according to the Albert Lea Police Department, which reminds drivers that holding a phone while driving is illegal.

More than 300 law enforcement agencies across the state are taking part in the April campaign which is coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety. "Who would run through the halls of a school or a crowded store blindfolded? Only those looking to get hurt you might say," said Albert Lea Police Department Lt. Jeff Strom. "So why would you do the same behind the wheel of a car? That's essentially what people are doing when looking down at their phones. Enough is enough! Now is the time to change the culture, put down the phone, tune out the distractions and speak up if you see others on the road making dangerous decisions. Together we can save lives on Minnesota roads." Minnesota's "no texting" law states that it's illegal for drivers to read, send texts and emails, and access the web while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic. That includes sitting at a stoplight or stop sign.

Violations may result in a:

- \$50 fine plus court fees for a first offense.
- \$275 fine plus court fees for a second and/or subsequent offense.
- Felony charge of criminal vehicular operation or homicide if you injure or kill someone because of texting and driving.
-

Distracted driving education is a component of Minnesota’s core traffic safety effort, [Toward Zero Deaths \(TZD\)](#). 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.

For more on the texting and driving law, [CLICK HERE](#).

KTTC – TV

04.11.2023

Increased patrols expected during Distracted Driving Awareness Month

By [Megan Zemple](#)



Link: [Increased patrols expected during Distracted Driving Awareness Month \(kttc.com\)](#)

ROCHESTER, Minn. (KTTC) – Increased law enforcement patrols will be on the roads during the month of April to combat distracted driving.

According to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, from 2018-2022, more than 32,000 vehicle crashes were caused by distracted driving. The department’s statistics also show that distracted driving contributes to an average of 28 deaths and 156 life-changing injuries every year.

“A lot of people believe they can multitask and drive while doing other things, but they just need to get out of that habit,” Minnesota State Patrol Sgt. Troy Christianson said. “Because you never know when something may happen, because you may be involved in a serious crash involving you or other people.” Fines for violating Minnesota’s [Hands-Free Law](#) can cost up to hundreds of dollars.

2023 Southeast TZD Workshop Media Coverage

KTTC – TV

05.03.2023

MN State Patrol says legal cannabis presents new challenges to driver safety

By [Noah Caplan](#)



Link: <https://www.kttc.com/2023/05/04/mn-state-patrol-says-legal-cannabis-presents-new-challenges-driver-safety/>

ROCHESTER, Minn. (KTTC) – With [legislation to legalize recreational cannabis](#) set to hit Governor Tim Walz’s desk soon, a new challenge waits for those enforcing driver safety: enforcing laws against driving while high. “We’re really concerned about people going from recreational use at home or a private setting and then getting on our roadways and operating a motor vehicle,” said Minnesota State Patrol Sergeant Eric Bormann. “That’s going to be our biggest challenge is to educate officers and get them to act on those signs of impairment.” *Sgt. Eric Bormann, Minnesota State Patrol*

Addressing these concerns was at the forefront of Sgt. Bormann’s mind at the Towards Zero Deaths Workshop in Rochester Wednesday. His presentation detailed many different kinds of way cannabis is consumed, and how to look out for it in drivers.

Bormann says driving under the influence of cannabis products will be enforced the same way a driver would be issued a DUI for driving drunk, but the biggest challenge is determining how a driver is high. “With alcohol we have a per se law, where with marijuana we don’t the fact that we have to prove impairment at the time of the arrest through evaluations,” said Winona County Deputy Chad Myers. Myers is also a Drug Recognition Evaluator (DRE), which means he has a special certification where he can determine if a driver is in fact high.

“[DRE’s] will play a big part in the marijuana aspect of it because there are certain things that we can do that maybe the average cop that hasn’t been trained with this can do and look for,” Myers said.

Post-Bulletin, Rochester, Minn.

05.03.2023

MnDOT hopeful traffic fatalities continue downward trend

By: Mark Wasson

[MnDOT hopeful traffic fatalities continue downward trend, Post-Bulletin \(Rochester, MN\), May 2, 2023, p1 \(newsbank.com\)](#)

May 2—ROCHESTER — Following an almost two-decade-long decrease in traffic fatalities, Minnesota saw a spike in deaths on its roadways following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

While it's still too early to tell for sure, those deaths may be on the downturn, according to Mark Wagner, assistant state traffic safety engineer with the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Wagner, who is speaking at the Southeast Minnesota's Toward Zero Deaths workshop on Wednesday, May 3, 2023, in Rochester's International Event Center, said those deaths are concerning and his team, along with MnDOT, are working to make roads safer.

"It's really sad to see the loss of life and the life-changing injuries that increased during the pandemic," Wagner said. "But at the same time, looking back 20 years when Toward Zero Deaths started, that was a hard time too, and we found a way to make it work."

Minnesota has seen a 33% decrease in traffic-related deaths since Toward Zero Deaths began in 2003 as a state traffic safety program that works to lessen roadway fatalities and serious injuries.

There were 394 deaths on Minnesota roads in 2020 compared with 364 in 2019. Deaths continued to increase in 2021, with the state reporting 488 fatalities.

Minnesotans saw a slight reprieve from traffic-related deaths in 2022, clocking in at 446 fatalities.

And the 2023 numbers are looking better than last year, according to Wagner.

"I don't know that this is a new normal that we can expect but I think it's too early to tell," Wagner said. "The evidence so far is pretty good that we're returning to the baseline we saw pre-pandemic, but I wouldn't make any definitive statements at this point."

Olmsted County has bucked the statewide and national trend of pandemic roadway fatalities, with the county reporting 16 deaths in 2019, 13 in 2020, and 6 in 2021, according to the

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The Twin Cities metro area usually has the most fatalities in the state with the southeast region being one

of the safer areas for motorists, according to Wagner.

There are several theories about why Minnesota saw an increase in deaths on its roadways, including enforcement issues and more free time for motorists to speed on less crowded roadways, Wagner said.

Whatever the cause, the state has seen what's makes roads safer and that includes more round-a-bouts, rumble strips, wider pavement markings and J-turns that force drivers to take a right on two-lane highways before being able to pull a U-turn 600 or so feet down the road in order to turn left.

Funding for traffic safety improvements is adequate, Wagner said, and the state receives federal funding to help with roadway improvements.

"We're still in the stage where we can get a lot of good safety treatments for not as much money," Wagner said. "But things like roundabouts and J-turns are getting more expensive."

The Toward Zero Deaths workshop will bring together several traffic safety partners to determine best practices for reducing deaths and injuries on Minnesota roadways which will include a discussion about cannabis DWIs with the Minnesota State Patrol.

KAAL – TV

05.03.2023

Cannabis: MSP concerned over traffic safety

By: Mayzie Olson



Link: <https://www.kaaltv.com/news/top-news/legal-cannabis-msp-concerned-over-traffic-safety/?fbclid=IwAR2U673ogQrzqfm55QtMPdIP2LB1Pd8mEHZT8BEY7y46jbWMLYEUFpSLR4>

ABC 6 News) – 20 years of saving lives, that’s what the Minnesota Department of Transportation celebrated in Rochester Wednesday.

City officials, law enforcement agencies and members of the public attended the department’s yearly conference – with big issues on the agenda. Cannabis is a big topic right now in Minnesota.

Wednesday, the state patrol acknowledged that Minnesota is well on its way to join the growing lists of states that have legalized recreational marijuana use. But officers say there’s still a lot of unanswered questions and little time left to answer them.

MSP officials say the biggest issue is that there is no “legal limit” when it comes to marijuana like there is with alcohol, and with legalization, law enforcement is struggling with how to keep people safe and how to get high drivers off the roads.

“We’re worried about people getting in a car and smoking it while they’re driving and being high while operating a motor vehicle. That’s our biggest challenge. And then how do we have officers recognize it and act on it and get a conviction for a DWI, that’s our biggest hurdle,” explained MN State Patrol Sgt. Eric Bormann.

Currently, officers use a number of tests like smell and increased pulse and body tremors to detect drug use. But many agencies are hopeful that a new roadside oral test could be key in figuring out if someone is driving high.

Statewide there are about 200 law enforcement drug recognition experts that play a huge role in determining impairment. But MSP says its not enough and hopes to increase that number to 500.

KAAL - TV

05.03.2023

MnDOT looks to install more school bus cameras

By: Mayzie Olson



Link: <https://www.kaaltv.com/news/top-news/mndot-looks-to-install-more-school-bus-cameras/?fbclid=IwAR01VMdWi71lj1gj9wjqlV8mTSA72nScg13dGegmeF-L5GTuY-Mw93JMNs>

(ABC 6 News) – For the past few months, schools across the area have been installing cameras on school buses to keep children safe from drivers illegally blowing through stop arms.

At the Minnesota Department of Transportation’s 20th anniversary conference, state officials discussed what’s coming next to hold these drivers accountable. All six of the grant phases are either in process or are officially complete, with 59% of school buses being equipped with cameras. But, MnDOT officials still have more plans in the works. The hope is to get more grants passed through the legislature to get all Minnesota buses equipped with cameras and to provide more education to drivers.

But with more time and resources spent enforcing and prosecuting these citations, law enforcement officials say there may need to be additional money coming in to balance that extra workload. “For the law enforcement agencies, how much time are you dedicating? Enforcement, follow-up, reports, prosecuting side of it just to help track it for further initiatives if we need to go back to the legislature. Granted we got 14.7 to put the cameras on there but what are we doing to help the agencies for the added workflow for them?,” explained Lt. Brian Reu

New data from MnDOT shows the number of violations have gone up because of an increase in stop arm violations reports with help from the cameras. But the goal is to change driving behaviors and eventually decrease the number of violations. Overall, law enforcement, bus drivers and safety coordinators say the school bus cameras have been a huge success in keeping kids safe.

Now, its up to everyone involved to compile more data for these future initiatives and decide what to do next.

KIMT – TV

05.03.23

Toward Zero Deaths reflects on 20 years of progress, cannabis education

By: [Max Haslow](#)



Link: https://www.kimt.com/news/local/toward-zero-deaths-reflects-on-20-years-of-progress-cannabis-education/article_e53f6b44-ea06-11ed-8a78-2f5b5724f8db.html

ROCHESTER, Minn. - After traffic deaths spiked during the pandemic, the Minnesota Department of Transportation says they're starting to go back down - and they're crediting the Toward Zero Deaths highway safety program.

Toward Zero Deaths, which started in 2003, hosted a workshop today at the Rochester International Event Center discussing progress on reducing traffic deaths while introducing new ways to continue the downward trend.

The main ballroom was jam-packed with guests listening to speakers go over presentations on crash data, teaching traffic safety through science, and how to better detect cannabis DWIs.

Toward Zero Death has seen traffic related fatalities fall by 33% since the program's inception. However, a spike in deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic hindered efforts.

Kristine Hernandez, the statewide program coordinator, says a decrease of cars on the roads during lockdowns led to an increase in reckless drivers that they are still trying to curb.

"We're looking at efforts to reduce speeds," she said. "Obviously, our law enforcement have been writing citations. There's a lot of 100 mile-per-hour drivers out there and that continues to happen, so we're looking at new ways to combat and get those speeds down."

So far, the program has seen success. MnDOT reported 444 traffic fatalities last year, a slight decrease from 2021.

Still, Toward Zero Deaths continues to look forward to new problems. With the legalization of recreational marijuana in Minnesota could bring a new wave cannabis-related accidents with officers not yet trained in spotting the more subtle signs of these DWIs.

"Having impairments on the road is always a concern," said Hernandez. "What we're looking at now is

educating anybody that might be under the influence of cannabis or other drugs and how that affects them because it is still impairment. We'll be working to combat that."

Toward Zero Deaths also looks forward to other new safety projects like crash review committees and cameras in school bus stop arms.

KIMT – TV

05.04.23

More bus stop arm cameras coming to SE Minnesota

[By Mike Bunge](#)



Link: https://www.kimt.com/news/more-bus-stop-arm-cameras-coming-to-se-minnesota/article_a6bca54c-eea8-11ed-91c9-936a08f988f0.html

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Five southeast Minnesota counties are sharing in state grants to install bus stop arm cameras to help keep students safe as they go to and from school.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) is getting out almost \$1.2 million to 27 schools and transportation companies.

\$3,535.25 is going to Grisim School Bus Inc. in Olmsted County for 6 camera system/buses. Hayfield Bus Company in Dodge, Mower, and Olmsted counties is getting \$20,998.13 for 7 camera system/buses. Triton Public Schools ISD 2125 in Dodge, Goodhue, and Steele counties will receive \$11,154.51 for 13 camera system/buses.

OTS says the grant project combines enforcement, education and awareness efforts so drivers obey the law and stop for buses with flashing lights and stop arms extended. The cameras are helping schools and law enforcement find the violators and hold them accountable.

The project is a partnership with law enforcement agencies including the Minnesota State Patrol, police departments and sheriff's offices statewide. Grant applicants provided support letters from local law enforcement agencies, an outreach plan and demonstrated need by sharing violation numbers from the last two years.

Construction Zone Media Coverage

KTTC – TV

05.15.23

Experts lay out safety reminders for drivers in construction zones

By: Darian Leddy



Link: [Experts lay out safety reminders for drivers in construction zones \(kttc.com\)](https://www.kttc.com)

ROCHESTER, Minn. (KTTC) – Deadly crashes in construction zones are on the rise in Minnesota. Last year, there were 11 deadly crashes in work zones in the state, totaling to 41 deaths in the past five years.

Year	Deadly Work Zone Crashes in MN
2018	8
2019	7
2020	5
2021	10
2022	11

It’s already happening this year. Over the weekend, [a 29-year-old man died](#) in a crash near a construction zone on Highway 52 north of Hampton. Road safety experts say the two main contributors to work zones crashes are speeding and distracted driving.

“It’s important that people eliminate the distractions all the time, but especially in these construction zones, because your speed will be reduced, so it’s important to reduce your speed prior to the zone. Then also just be aware of workers and also heavy equipment moving in these zones,” Minnesota State Patrol Sgt. Troy Christianson said.

There are some pretty major projects happening along Highway 52 around Zumbrota and Cannon Falls for the next few months. “It depends on the time of day; you can see some traffic delays. So we have people squeezed down to single lane in both directions,” MnDOT spokesperson Mike Dougherty said.

Road experts want to remind folks to be both patient and alert while driving in these work zones.

“If you think about it, those work zones are relatively small and short, so while the delay may seem large, it’s usually a small number of minutes,” Dougherty said.

“We anticipate traffic volumes picking up with summer starting. When school gets out, we’ll definitely have more traffic volumes,” Sgt. Christianson said. If you get pulled over in a construction zone, don’t expect to come away with just a warning. Fines are doubled in work zones. “That’s how important it is and how dangerous these zones are when we have to increase the fines and make sure people are aware of the dangers that are in these zones,” Sgt. Christianson said.

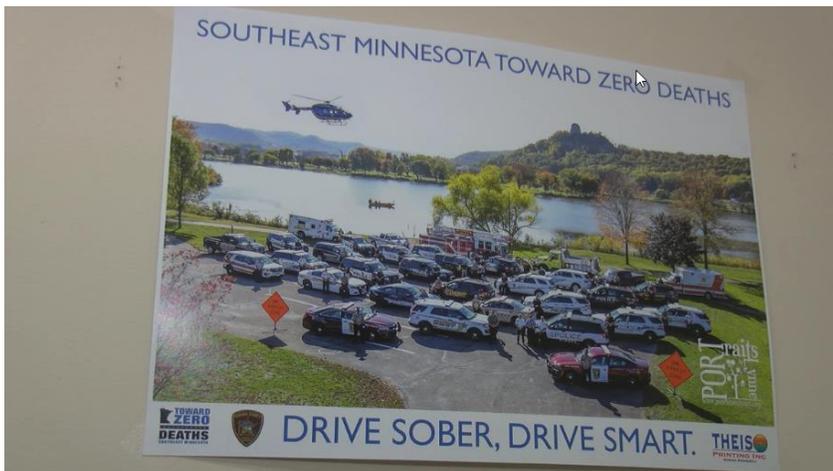
Transportation officials say construction crews appreciate when us drivers following the rules of the road. “The rules are put in there and the way traffic is set up is for everybody’s safety. Their safety but as well as the motorists,” Dougherty said. Those projects along Hwy 52 are expected to wrap up in late October, early November.

Deadliest Days Media Coverage

KTTC – TV
06.24.23

Law enforcement increases patrols for 100 deadliest days on Minnesota roads

By [Darlan Leddy](#)



Link: [Law enforcement increases patrols for 100 deadliest days on Minnesota roads \(kttc.com\)](https://www.kttc.com)

ROCHESTER, Minn. (KTTC) – The summer months are considered the 100 deadliest days on Minnesota roadways. At the start of the season this year, law enforcement saw the most deadly crashes in a decade with 60 deaths in 25 days.

So far, there have been nearly 200 deadly crashes this year. That’s trending slightly down compared to this time last year. In 2022, there were nearly 500 deadly crashes total.

So, law enforcement agencies across the state are working to add more speed patrols to catch dangerous drivers with the goal of stopping traffic deaths.

“Speed is the number one factor we’re seeing this summer on our roadways that are causing the fatal crashes. We’re going to have more enforcement for speed the whole month of July and also we’re going to start that in August as well,” Minnesota State Patrol Sergeant Troy Christianson said.

Toward Zeros Deaths is another program working to reduce the number of deadly crashes. “We have our enforcement which is my responsibility, we have the engineering, we have the education, and we have emergency medical services. So as a group, the four E’s work together to try to bring down the number of crashes and fatalities in Minnesota,” Olmsted County Sheriff’s Office Towards Zero Deaths coordinator Michelle Ness said. While speed is the number one factor in deadly crashes, there are also others like impaired driving.

“It’s also important that people remember to line up a designated driver and plan ahead or take advantage of some sort of rideshare or Uber or taxi services just so you can get home safely,” Sgt. Christianson said.

Another factor is not wearing your seatbelt. “A car is meant for you to stay inside it; those features with airbags, and such are meant to keep you safe in the vehicle. Without a seatbelt, you’re going to be possibly thrown from the vehicle or thrown around inside your vehicle,” Ness said.

You’ve probably noticed more squad cars camped out on major roads like Highway 14 and 52.

“We want to focus on the troubled areas on the roadways to make sure that we’re visible and present and people will know they’ll get stopped and cited for speed,” Sgt. Christian said. Law enforcement says the goal isn’t to pull over the most people or hand out the most tickets. The ultimate goal is to stop the speeding that could lead to loss of life.

“We’re tired of giving notices of people dying in these crashes. We’d prefer for never have to give a death notification again. If it gets people talking and gets people to slow down, then we’ve done our job,” Ness said.

State patrol also has a program called HEAT. It stands for Highway Enforcement of Aggressive Traffic. It’s a group of a dozen troopers who come down to different areas of the state to help patrol. They’ll be in the Rochester area the second week of August.

Speed Enforcement Media Coverage

KAAL – TV

06.30.2023

Extra speed enforcement on Minnesota roads expected throughout July



Link: [Extra speed enforcement on Minnesota roads expected throughout July - ABC 6 News - kaaltv.com](https://www.kaaltv.com/news/extra-speed-enforcement-on-minnesota-roads-expected-throughout-july) (ABC 6 News) – The [Minnesota Department of Public Safety \(DPS\) Office of Traffic Safety \(OTS\)](#) announced that extra law enforcement will be on Minnesota roads throughout July in an effort to curb speeding. Officers, deputies and troopers will be looking for speeders endangering their own lives and the lives of others. The OTS coordinates the campaign with funding provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

The campaign includes extra patrols and advertising in support of the [Toward Zero Deaths](#) traffic safety program. “The 100 days between Memorial Day and Labor Day have a deadly reputation on Minnesota roads,” said OTS Director Mike Hanson. “During the first 25 days of the current 100 days, preliminary figures show 46 people have lost their lives in crashes. That’s the highest in that timespan in the last 10 years. As Minnesotans hit the road for Fourth of July, they can help change this deadly trajectory with smart choices such as slowing down.”

In 2022, the OTS said preliminary numbers show **129** motorists died in speed-related crashes in Minnesota. During the 100 deadliest days in the past five years (2018-2022), preliminary numbers show that **231** people lost their lives in speed-related crashes. Speed contributed to an average of **85** deaths per year from 2013-2017, but an average of **122** deaths per year from 2018-2022, said the OTS.

Since the start of the year through June 25, preliminary numbers show there have been **47** speed-related traffic fatalities in the state, down from **53** during the same time span in 2022, and **80** in 2021.