



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## MINNESOTA TRAFFIC FATALITIES CONTINUE TO CHANGE LIVES FOREVER *2018 Crash Facts Shows 6% Increase in Traffic Deaths*

**ST. PAUL –** A young, pregnant wife and mother lost her life when a distracted truck driver rear-ended her vehicle. A wife grieved the loss of her husband, a construction worker who was killed by a driver charged with streaming videos on his phone. A 21-year-old man riding in a horse and buggy lost his life after being struck by a drunk, hit-and-run driver. These are just a few of the stories behind the 381 lives lost on Minnesota roadways in 2018.

The data is reported in [Minnesota Motor Vehicle Crash Facts 2018](#) and published by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (DPS-OTS). **Crash Facts** is an annual summary of traffic crashes derived from law enforcement reports and describes how, why and where crashes occurred and who was involved. The information guides future traffic safety initiatives that are intended to improve traffic safety and change driver behavior.

While Minnesota saw a 6 percent increase in traffic fatalities from the previous year (358), Minnesota continues to see a downward trend in traffic fatalities over five-year periods. From 2009-2013, Minnesota saw an average of 396 deaths per year. In the last five years, there have been an average of 381 deaths, a 4 percent decrease.

The top four contributing factors in Minnesota 2018 traffic fatalities continue to be:

- Speed: 113
- Failing to buckle up: 96
- Impaired driving: 84
- Distractions: 29

“Our goal is to drive Minnesota traffic deaths to zero,” said Mike Hanson, Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety director. “We can’t reach that goal through enforcement alone. We need the help of every driver and everyone on the road. We are losing too many of our friends and family members to completely preventable events. Help drive the traffic fatalities down by doing your part. That means always buckling up, driving hands-free and putting the distractions away,

**always lining up a sober ride and driving the speed limit or according to the conditions of the road.”**

### **2018 Minnesota Traffic Crash Snapshot**

- 79,215 traffic crashes, involving 146,107 motor vehicles.**
- 172,908 people were involved in crashes.**
- 381 people died and 27,877 people were injured.**

### **An average day in 2018**

- 217 crashes.**
- One death and 76 injuries.**
- Average daily cost to Minnesota: \$4,915,406**

### **A Challenging Start to 2019**

**It has been a challenging eight months on Minnesota roads, as 223 people have lost their lives in traffic crashes so far in 2019, compared with 218 reported this time last year.**

### **The 223 deaths in 2019 include (preliminary numbers):**

- 41 unbelted motorists.**
- 33 motorcyclists, compared with 45 riders this time last year.**
- 25 pedestrians, compared with 18 this time last year.**
- Six bicyclists, compared with five this time last year.**

### **Breakdown of 2018 Traffic Deaths and Injuries**

**The lives lost in 2018 represent more than just statistics; they are mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, children and friends.**

### **The 381 fatalities include:**

- 258 motorists**
- 58 motorcyclists**
- 45 pedestrians**
- Nine ATV riders**
- Seven bicyclists**
- One commercial bus rider**
- Three other vehicle types**

### **The Alcohol Factor**

**Drunk driving continues to be a major issue on Minnesota roads with 26,414 DWI in 2018. Those numbers are equivalent to nearly three DWI arrests per hour.**

### **The numbers also reveal:**

- 123 alcohol-related deaths. Alcohol-related is defined as any evidence of alcohol detected in a driver, pedestrian or bicyclist.**
- 84 drunk driving fatalities, the most since 2015 (95). Drunk driving-related is defined as any driver with a BAC of .08 or above.**
- 2,156 alcohol-related injuries.**

- One in seven Minnesota drivers has a DWI.

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

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

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

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

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

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