



## Get the Facts: Summer Driving Safety

### In a Nutshell

It's summertime and the driving is....risky.

### What should I know about safe summer driving?

Don't let a vehicle crash or other incident turn your long-planned family road trip – or a routine drive to work – into tragedy. Summer driving comes with unique challenges including heat, fatigued or distracted drivers and roadside work zones.

*Each year an average 38 children under age 15 die from heatstroke after being left in a vehicle. In 2021, 23 children died this way.*

### Tips for making summer driving safer for everyone

- Wear your safety belt whenever you drive and make sure your passengers do, too. They reduce the risk of fatalities to front seat passengers by 45% and cut injury risk by 50%. Belts prevent passengers from being ejected from the car (most passengers who are ejected from cars die).
- Minnesota's seat belt law is a primary offense; drivers and all passengers must be buckled up or in the correct child restraint.
- Turn your headlights on in bad weather. Minnesota law requires them whenever there is precipitation and visibility is reduced to 500 feet or less.
- Follow the three-second rule between cars, longer in bad weather. Don't tailgate – you won't have enough time to stop in an emergency. If someone is tailgating you, get out of the way and let them pass.
- Summer in Minnesota means road construction. Be alert to road conditions, workers and equipment. Fines for speed violations double in work zones.
- Don't drive if you're sleepy. Driving while drowsy can be as deadly as drinking and driving. Take breaks and share driving if you can.
- Relax and enjoy the ride. Don't let anger at other drivers interfere with your good judgment. If another driver is acting aggressively, put as much space between your vehicle and theirs as possible.





### **And especially kids!**

- The back seat is the safest place for children to ride. Under Minnesota law, a child cannot use a seat belt alone until they are age 8, or 4 feet 9 inches tall.
- Don't leave children (or pets) alone in vehicles, even to run a quick errand. Even in 70-degree weather, car interior temperatures can quickly reach dangerous levels causing devastating injury, permanent brain damage or death.
- Bring snacks, music and games to keep children busy so they don't break your driving concentration.
- Kids are outside more in summer. Teach them to never play around or in vehicles. Lock your vehicle and keep keys out of kids' reach. Always remember to take a quick walk around your vehicle before backing up.
- Be aware of additional bicyclists sharing the road. Take extra care when entering and exiting driveways and alleys and be especially alert in residential neighborhoods and downtown areas.

#### **Sources:**

National Safety Council

Minnesota Department of Public Safety

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

