

100 DAYS – 140 Tools to Combat Impaired Driving!

Right before Memorial Day, Minnesota NETS and our partner AAA Minnesota kicked off “[Impaired is Impaired](#)”, one of our biggest traffic safety campaigns ever.

In Minnesota and across the country, the weeks between Memorial Day and Labor Day represent a high period for crashes, injuries and fatalities each year, with a significant portion of them due to impaired driving. In fact, according to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, 34% of annual fatal crashes occur during this holiday-bookended period. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day 2022, Minnesota recorded 155 fatalities, and 6,501 injuries.



Time for a Name Change – 100 SAFEST Days on the Road

For years, the traffic safety community has dubbed the period between Memorial Day and Labor Day the 100 Deadliest Days on the Road. In her latest [blog](#), Minnesota NETS Coordinator Lisa Kons says it’s time for a name change, starting with tackling the impaired driving epidemic.

JUNE IS NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH

Looking to share information on a wide range of safety topics? June is National Safety Month and the National Safety Council (NSC) has a full slate of exclusive posters, tip sheets, safety talks and webinars plus additional resources to keep workers safe this month and all year long. Available free to NSC members [here](#).



Impaired is Impaired Campaign

Impaired driving behaviors are a leading contributing factor in these crashes and include alcohol and drug consumption, but also extend to distractions like cell phone use, aggression and “road rage;” drowsiness, adjusting vehicle controls, dealing with backseat passengers or pets; eating, drinking and personal grooming. These impairments are even riskier for inexperienced teen drivers and for those in roadside work zones.

Now it’s your turn to make the most of the 140 different tools available on the [campaign webpage](#) to build awareness among your employees and in your community. These include an audio public service announcement, social media graphics, a leadership guide, emails targeted at employees, five-minute safety talks, fact sheets and more.

We’ll be posting #ImpairedisImpaired and #100DeadliestDays information on our Minnesota NETS [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) accounts for 106 straight days (be sure to share them!). And we’re very excited about our five “[Time for a do-over](#)” videos suitable for social media, websites and presentations.



SAFETY ON RAMP: Zipper Merge

Welcome to Safety On Ramp featuring practical advice from Minnesota Department of Transportation experts. And what better inaugural topic than the ins and outs of the Zipper Merge which continues to flummox drivers approaching work zones.

The Zipper Merge (also known as the “late merge”) is a safety tool roadway agencies use when they need to repair and replace roads. When approaching a work zone where there is a reduction in the number of lanes (e.g. two lanes go to just one lane), drivers should plan on utilizing all available lanes until the reduction, and then “zipper” together into the one lane by taking turns.

The Zipper Merge driving strategy requires a change in the mindset of motorists who traditionally have been taught to merge early when recognizing that a lane will end. But the results of early merging can be longer backups, increases in crashes and, disturbingly, road rage incidents. Here’s the driving procedure to follow:

1. When you see the “lane closed ahead” sign and traffic is heavy and slow, stay in your current lane up to the merge point (where the lane ends).

2. Then, take turns with other drivers to ease safely and smoothly into the remaining lane.

When traffic is heavy and slow, it is much safer for motorists to remain in their current traffic lane until the point where traffic can orderly take turns merging.

THE ZIPPER MERGE BENEFITS DRIVERS BY:

- Reducing the difference in speeds between two lanes. Changing lanes when traffic is traveling at approximately the same speed is easier and safer.
- Reducing the overall length of traffic backup by as much as 40%!
- Reducing congestion on freeway interchanges, especially in the metropolitan area.
- Creating a sense of fairness and equity that all lanes are moving at the same rate.
- Reducing incidents of road rage.



Recreational Marijuana

What will recreational marijuana legalization mean for Minnesota roads?

Marijuana possession by adults will be legal in Minnesota on August 1.

What will that mean for you, your workers and others, especially when they get behind the wheel?

Stay tuned for more information about an upcoming webinar series that will address this new law.

Examples of Signs You May See When Approaching a Zipper Merge



Watch this three-minute instructional [video](#).



**NETWORK OF
EMPLOYERS FOR
TRAFFIC SAFETY**
MINNESOTA

Lisa Kons, NETS Coordinator
651-228-7330/800-444-9150
lisa.kons@mncsc.org
474 Concordia Ave, St. Paul, MN 55103

Connect With Us!
drivesafemn.org



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