

Be Grateful AND Be Cautious

Thanksgiving is one of the busiest travel weekends of the year as people head out to see family. With all the rushing around and holiday travel, it's a great time to remind drivers and passengers to buckle their seat belts. Take this time to prioritize seat belt safety within your organization by downloading and sharing National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) resources with your employees — [Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time.](#)

See the sidebar for tips for keeping holiday road trips safe.

This month Minnesota NETS Coordinator Lisa Kons reminds us in her [blog](#) that even with the constant challenge of educating drivers to keep our roadways safe, the Minnesota traffic safety community has a lot to be thankful for this year.



Safe Driving Tips

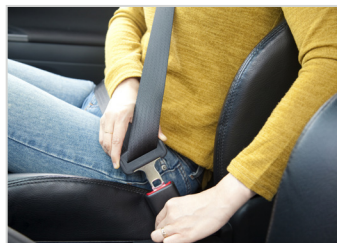
NHTSA recommends these tips for staying safe on the road to Grandma's or wherever you're going this holiday season:

- **Travel at a safe speed.** Speed affects your safety even when you are driving at the speed limit but too fast for road conditions, such as during bad weather, when a road is under repair, or in an area at night that isn't well lit.
- **Don't drive distracted.** Pay attention to the road. Texting is the most alarming distraction. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for at least 5 seconds. Teens are the largest age group reported as distracted at the time of fatal crashes.
- **Wear a seat belt.** The simple act of buckling your seat belt increases your chance of surviving a crash.
- **Make sure children are buckled in the right seats for their ages and sizes.** Since 1975, 11,606 children ages 4 and under have been saved by child restraints.
- **Kids and passengers bickering.** Pull over safely before you address arguments or other needs.
- **Drive sober.** Designate a sober driver if you plan to drink.

Timing Turkey Day Road Trips

WHEN IT COMES TO HOLIDAY ROAD TRIPS, IT'S BOTH THE JOURNEY AND THE DESTINATION THAT MATTER.

Thanksgiving is typically one of the busiest holidays for road trips over 50 miles with many travelers planning a multi-day visit to family and friends and others making roundtrips on the day itself.



Google research across 20 major U.S. cities shows hitting the road Monday evening is your best choice to avoid traffic, with the greatest roadway congestion occurring when holiday drivers overlap with regular evening commute on Tuesday and Wednesday, around 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. local time. Those who need to travel on Wednesday should consider leaving before 8 a.m. or after 8 p.m.

For those traveling by road on Turkey Day itself, the worst congestion typically occurs about 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., making it advisable to drive in the morning or after 6 p.m.

Traffic on the return trip typically offers more flexibility, although Black Friday shopping can clog some roads, especially between noon and 4 p.m. on Friday, according to Google. Traffic also peaks from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.



Beware Blackout Wednesday

Most of us are well-acquainted with Black Friday sales, but did you know that Thanksgiving Eve is now known as Blackout Wednesday?

Over the last decade or so, Wednesday night before Turkey Day has become a traditional time for friends to reunite at local watering holes, especially the home-from-college crowd. In fact, it's now the biggest bar-going night of the year with many establishments offering specials. Unfortunately, this tradition also means an increased number of impaired drivers on the road and contributes to the already high weekend numbers of crashes, injuries and fatalities.

We've got numerous tools available to help you build awareness among your employees of Blackout Wednesday and the overall holiday season driving risks, as well as spread the word via your social media channels: [DriveSafeMN Blackout Wednesday](#); [Holiday Impaired Driving Resources](#); [Impaired is Impaired campaign materials](#).

Taking the Traffic Safety Story Global

Last month we had a chance to take traffic safety messages global. As part of its Zero Harm Week, Cargill invited Minnesota NETS Coordinator Lisa Kons to present to global employees about the hazards of distraction — a risk for everyone no matter where they live.

The event drew over 1,300 viewers with participants joining in from Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and North America. Kons and her co-presenter Ben Ferguson, Cargill's Human and Organizational Performance Program lead, talked about the myth of multitasking and how distraction is the result of trying to do multiple things at once. The two reminded employees that whether they're driving, walking or doing some other activity, the risks associated with visual, manual and cognitive distractions can lead to vehicle crashes and personal injuries.



Warning: Winter Driving Ahead

Most of Minnesota experienced this Halloween's introduction to Winter. It was a rough ride for many, with law enforcement reporting about 200 crashes during the first hours of the October 30 snowstorm.

Before the next storm rolls through, it's time to brush up those winter driving skills. Whether employees drive for work or simply to and from, a crash can take them off the job.

Protect your employees during the high-risk holiday season by promoting the dangers of [impaired driving](#) and providing resources.

MN NETS RESOURCES:

- [Winter Driving Tips](#)
- [Winter Driving Fact Sheet](#)
- [2022 Winter Driving Webinar](#)

We also encourage you to offer a winter driving safety presentation, covering:

- Following distance and reaction time
- Blind spots and tailgates
- Slipping and sliding
- How to prepare your car for winter
- Winter travel tips
- Emergency stops
- Bridge decks and entrance ramps

To schedule a FREE program at your location, contact Lisa Kons at 651-228-7330; lisa.kons@mnscc.org.



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