

## This Year Send a Special Valentine's Day Greeting

Candy, flowers and special dinners are nice, but why not demonstrate true love with a life-saving traffic safety message. In this month's [blog](#), Lisa Kons offers suggestions for how to make safe driving part of your love language.

February is a great time to visit our [Do it for ME](#) campaign page on [DriveSafeMN](#). You'll find great educational tools to remind yourself, your colleagues and loved ones that the best gifts are to slow down and pay attention. Tools include: a heartfelt [video message](#) from Minnesota influencer Sheletta Brundidge and her kids, five-minute safety talks, fact sheet, social media messages and images.

And as we move closer to spring each day, we're preparing a new campaign that reminds us that our loved ones count on us to return home to them. Watch for April's launch of Do it for THEM, the continuation of our successful Fall 2023 [Do it for ME](#) campaign.



## Make Your Own Luck — Don't Drive Impaired on St. Patrick's Day



St. Patrick's Day has become a day many embrace as an opportunity to have fun no matter what their heritage. In addition to festive parades and the wearing o'the green, that fun often includes alcoholic beverages. As the days tick off to March 17, it's a great time to remind colleagues and others that driving while under the influence is never a lucky move.

### St. Patrick's Day is One of the Deadliest Days on Our Nation's Roads:

- **272** lives were lost in drunk-driving crashes during the St. Patrick's Day holiday period (6 p.m. March 16 to 5:59 a.m. March 18) from 2017–2021.
- **47** people were killed in drunk-driving crashes over the 2021 St. Patrick's Day holiday period.
- Year after year, the rate of impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes is higher at night on St. Patrick's Day.
- In 2021, **41** of the 47 traffic fatalities involving an impaired driver during the holiday period occurred in the nighttime hours (6p.m. to 5:59 a.m.). Still, **31** daytime fatalities in drunk-driving crashes occurred between 2017 and 2021 over the St. Patrick's Day holiday period.

## Plan for a Safe, Sober Ride Home

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has a comprehensive St. Patrick's Day [communication kit](#) encouraging drivers not to get behind the wheel after drinking and to plan for a safe, sober ride home after holiday festivities.

Help spread the word about St. Patrick's Day driving safety through social media. The online [social media playbook](#) includes sample messages and graphics plus fact sheets and messages for electronic display boards.

You can also find impaired driving educational resources at DriveSafeMN: [fact sheets](#), [5-minute safety talks](#) and [videos](#).





## Turn, Turn, Turn Your Clocks Ahead — But Don't Drive Drowsy

It's almost time to turn our clocks ahead once more. And while the annual shift to Daylight Saving Time on March 10 is a welcome reminder that spring is coming, it's also an especially risky time on the road.

The time change can disrupt sleep, leaving drivers drowsy, especially at the end of the workday. An article on [DriveSafeOnline](#) reminds us of the risks following the switch to Daylight Saving Time. Want to get ahead of the spring DST game? Follow these [Mayo Clinic](#) tips to help you adjust:

- **Go to bed an hour earlier if possible.** A consistent sleep schedule where you get at least 7–8 hours of sleep is important for your health. If that change is not doable for your schedule, go to bed 15 or 20 minutes earlier. Any extra rest time will be helpful.
- **Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine before bedtime** because they can affect the quality of your sleep.
- **Stay away from heavy meals before bedtime.** You may feel discomfort that will keep you awake.
- **Avoid watching TV or interacting with your phone before bedtime.** Light-emitting screens can negatively affect your sleep pattern.
- **Keep your bedroom dark** so your internal clock knows it's time to go to sleep.

In 2021, 684 people died nationally in drowsy driving-related crashes. NHTSA offers additional [insights and guidance](#) for avoiding drowsy driving no matter what the time of year. You can also find resources at [DriveSafeMN](#) including this [fact sheet](#) suitable for posting or distribution.

## Brush Off Those Winter Driving Skills

While Winter 2023–24 has been conspicuously mild and often absent, it's not over until it's over. February and March are typically among the snowiest months of the year and it's not unheard of in Minnesota to have a dozen or more inches in April.

But with few storms this season, most Minnesotans are not back to peak form when it comes to winter driving. Keep your winter driving skills sharp with these tips:

- Stay home if you can
- Be sure to brush ALL snow off your vehicle before heading out
- Slow down
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly
- Increase your following distance
- Know your brakes
- Don't stop if you can avoid it
- Don't power up hills
- Don't stop going up a hill

It's not yet time to remove your winter safety kit from the car to make room for spring sports equipment. And remember, always drive safely around snowplows.

When the forecast tells you a big snowstorm is on the way, it's a great time to distribute this DriveSafeMN [Winter Driving Fact Sheet](#) as a refresher for your team.



NETWORK OF  
EMPLOYERS FOR  
TRAFFIC SAFETY  
MINNESOTA

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

Connect With Us!  
[drivesafemn.org](#)



MN NETS is a partnership with the MN Safety Council, funded by the MN Department of Public Safety/Office of Traffic Safety.