

March Madness and March Messages

While you're making your NCAA basketball tournament picks, there's another kind of March Madness underway. As Lisa Kons writes in this month's [blog](#), March can challenge us from a traffic safety perspective. We think spring is on the way, yet winter storms that test driving skills are a likelihood for several more weeks. Celebratory occasions like Mardi Gras and St. Patrick's Day carry high risks of impaired driving. And, in the midst of this, Daylight-Saving Time returns.

What's a traffic safety advocate to do? As always, sharing information and providing education are key. In this issue, you'll find awareness-building resources — tips for helping drivers stay safe behind the wheel once we "spring forward", holiday sober driver campaigns and a seat belt campaign for CMV drivers. If you're planning ahead, see our list of upcoming campaigns. Most notably, April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Stay tuned for exciting new tools to help reduce the number of distracted driving crashes, injuries and deaths.

Spring Forward but Don't Fall Asleep at the Wheel

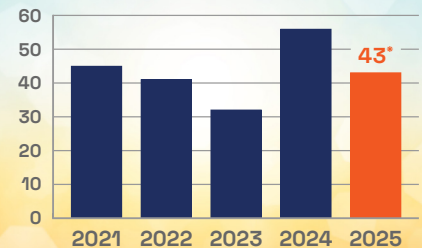
The consequence of missing an appointment because you failed to set your clock ahead one-hour pales in comparison to the greatest risk from the annual "spring forward" switch to Daylight-Saving Time (DST) — driver fatigue and vehicle crashes.



As Minnesota and 47 other states gear up for the return to DST on March 9, now's the time to build driver awareness and encourage preparation. A 2020 study published in Current Biology showed an estimated 6% increase in crashes during the first week of DST, primarily attributed to driver fatigue caused by sleep deprivation due to the lost hour of sleep.

To mitigate the risks, experts advise adjusting sleep schedules a few days before the time change and being extra cautious while driving afterwards. The risk of crashes is particularly high in the morning hours following the time change. Drowsy driving is a serious and often overlooked danger on the road. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), about 1 in 25 adult drivers admit to falling asleep while driving. [The National Sleep Foundation](#) estimates that drowsy driving contributes to approximately 6,400 fatalities each year.

MINNESOTA TRAFFIC FATALITIES
January 1 – February 28



Source: MN Dept. of Public Safety *Preliminary

Driving a CMV? Buckle Up!

If you're a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) driver or are responsible for those who get behind the wheels of large trucks and buses, the first step to staying safe is to buckle up.

This month the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) reminds CMV drivers to wear their seat belts every trip. And while most CMV drivers comply, FMCSA's March seat belt campaign urges ALL CMV drivers to buckle up to save their lives.

The "Y I Buckle Up" Campaign

is designed for CMV carriers and motorcoach companies,



along with other organizations employing CMV drivers. The [CMV Seat Belt Toolkit](#) includes employee educational materials, a social media playbook, graphics and video PSAs.



Make Your Own Luck — Plan a Sober Ride for March Celebrations

March 4 is Fat Tuesday, the final day of Mardi Gras which is quickly gaining popularity beyond New Orleans. With St. Patrick's Day right behind it on March 17, revelers have multiple chances this month to celebrate and risk driving while impaired.

Fatal crashes involving alcohol are **16.1%** more common during the St. Patrick's Day holiday period (March 16 – 18), than the rest of March, according to a recent insurance industry national analysis. Between 2007 and 2021 there were an average of **978** fatal crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver per day in March, excluding the holiday period. That figure increased to an average of **1,135** deadly crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver per day for the St. Patrick's Day holiday period.

For the St. Patrick's Day Period:

- The average number of young drivers ages 21 to 24 involved in fatal crashes rose **15%**.
- Fatal crashes involving hit-and-runs increased by **12.5%**.
- Fatal crashes involving motorcycles and large trucks increased by **14.1%** and **9.9%** respectively.
- Fatal crashes involving rollovers increased by **7.6%**, while those involving roadway departures rose by **5.9%**.

Follow These AAA Tips to Stay Safe During March Celebrations:

- Always drive **100%** sober.
- Plan a sober ride in advance, whether it's a designated driver, taxi or rideshare.
- If you're hosting, encourage guests to stay overnight or avoid driving altogether.
- If you're the designated driver, take the job seriously and don't drink at all.

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Plan now to make the most of these traffic safety campaigns to help prevent distracted driving:

“DO IT FOR ME.” CAMPAIGN EXPANSION

The Minnesota Safety Council, in partnership with State Farm and traffic safety partners, is launching “Do it For Me — I/We Need You,” a multi-faceted awareness and educational campaign. The campaign will feature the growing number of specialized law enforcement vehicles used to record distracted behavior and highlight a range of distractions ranging from cell phones to grooming to cooking while driving. Campaign materials, including videos, will be available the week of March 24 on [DriveSafeMN](#). A media event and other kickoff activities are planned.

“DON'T DRIVE DISTRACTED. EYES FORWARD.”

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has a comprehensive selection of tools available in “[Don't Drive Distracted. Eyes Forward.](#)” The campaign includes video, digital, audio and print advertisements as well as a [map](#) depicting which states make cellphone use while driving primary and secondary offenses.



**NETWORK OF
EMPLOYERS FOR
TRAFFIC SAFETY**
MINNESOTA

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

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



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