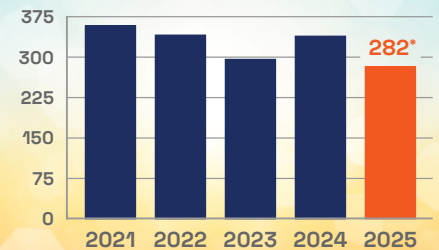


Jump into Autumn Traffic Safety Tools

It's officially fall and in addition to pumpkin spice everything, autumn features unique traffic safety challenges including shorter days and more driving in the dark, increased risks for pedestrians, and a peak in vehicle-deer crashes. For this issue, we've raked up a big pile of traffic safety education tools you can jump into and share with your teams, employees and other audiences to raise awareness.

Autumn also means the final weeks of major league baseball season. And while Lisa Kons won't be cheering for the Minnesota Twins in the playoffs this year, in this month's [blog](#) she shares a list of impressive traffic safety wins for the fantastic team of traffic safety advocates across Minnesota. Among the highlights was teaming up with the Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety, the Minnesota State Patrol and the Maple Grove Fire Department for a media event promoting Child Passenger Safety Week and Click It or Ticket enforcement.

MINNESOTA TRAFFIC FATALITIES
January 1 – September 30



Source: MN Dept. of Public Safety

*Preliminary

National School Bus Safety Week

October 20 – 24, 2025

Here comes the bus!
School Bus Safety

Week is a great time to remind drivers that those iconic bright yellow vehicles mean children are present and at increased risk.



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports **971** fatal school-bus-related crashes between 2014 – 2023 with **1,079** people killed.

From 2000 – 2023, there were **61** fatalities in crashes that involved a driver illegally passing a stopped school bus. Almost half of those fatalities were pedestrians age 18 years or younger.

■ [NHTSA School Bus Safety Week Campaign Materials](#)

■ [National Association for Pupil Transportation Resources](#)

■ [National Safety Council Tips](#)

Buckling Up Takes Center Stage

The message was clear as traffic safety advocates kicked off National Child Passenger Safety Week and statewide Click It or Ticket enforcement during a news conference last month — seat belts and car seats save lives, and it's the law.

Minnesota State Patrol Col. Christina Bogojevic highlighted that troopers and law enforcement officers don't enjoy giving tickets, but what they enjoy far less is the heartbreaking experience of informing families that a loved one has died in a crash. Jennifer Starkson lost her daughter, Morgan, in a crash in June 2024. Her three granddaughters survived, properly buckled in their car seats. "I want to tell every parent, grandparent and anyone else who drives with a child: buckle them up. Don't take a chance. Her three babies are with us today because she buckled every time." Minnesota seat belt usage is now 95.2%, but "we can do better," said Mike Hanson, director of the Office of Traffic Safety. "Let's get to 100%. That simple little strap is preventing tragedy every day." Watch the [News Conference Video](#) and visit BuckleUpMN.org for comprehensive car seat and seat belt resources.



News media gathered at Maple Grove Fire Department as traffic safety advocates called for seat belt and proper car seat usage.



October is Pedestrian Safety Month

At some point during the day, everyone is a pedestrian. Remind drivers to slow down and watch for people during National Pedestrian Safety Month. As the days grow shorter and darker, risk increases for walkers, runners and other pedestrians.

In 2023, one pedestrian was killed every 72 minutes in U.S. traffic crashes. 7,314 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes that year and pedestrian deaths made up 18% of all crash fatalities. In addition, 17% of the children age 14 and younger killed in traffic crashes were pedestrians. Urban areas had a much higher pedestrian fatality rate than rural areas.

NHTSA has comprehensive communication and education tools available to address this safety crisis. The centerpiece of this year's campaign is their new [Pedestrian Safety Community Resource Guide](#) which provides step-by-step materials for creating a local pedestrian safety coalition. It outlines community activities and other ways to engage and educate pedestrians in every age group. NHTSA also has a [Pedestrian Safety Month Toolkit](#) that includes social media posts, graphics and more.

Teen Driver Safety Week

They're young, eager and they're inexperienced. They're teen drivers. October 19–25 is Teen Driver Safety Week — addressing a leading cause of death for teens age 15–18 — traffic crashes. 2,611 people were killed in U.S. traffic crashes that involved a teen driver in 2023, and 822 of those killed were the teen driver. [NHTSA's Campaign](#) has numerous resources.



Fall Driving: Pay Extra Attention

Autumn means turning leaves and changing driving conditions. Whether you're setting out at sunrise or heading home at dusk, driving in the fall means being alert to shorter days with limited daylight and additional dark.

Safe Driving for the Season

While the later sunrises and earlier sunsets are beautiful, they also mean you will have sun directly in your eyes or reflecting off a mirror as you commute. It can be blinding, at worst, and cause fatigue and distraction.

■ [Fact Sheet: Take the Scary Out of Fall Driving](#)

Challenges for Older Drivers

Shorter days increase night driving risks for those age 50 and over. As we age, the eye muscles that react to limited light by widening the pupils do not work as well. If you see halos around lights, or they appear to "bloom," it could indicate an eye issue.

■ [Fact Sheet: Older Drivers Behind the Wheel](#)

Stay Alert for Deer!

Vehicle-deer crashes peak in fall as deer increase their movement. Minnesota reports 6,000 crashes each year but there are likely more as those without injuries/fatalities go unreported. A 2024 research study found that the Twin Cities metro outskirts have the greatest number of vehicle-deer crashes.

■ [Fact Sheet: Oh, Deer!](#)



NETWORK OF
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MINNESOTA

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