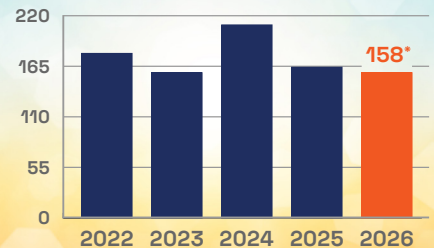


## The Summer Goal: Hit the Road Safely

Billions of eyes around the globe are glued to screens this month as the World Cup Soccer Tournament unfolds. And while wins are always preferable, the points gained through ties can keep you in the game for a while. That's a good thing, but it's worrisome when a tie reflects a negative trend — we're seeing that on our roads.

Crash deaths declined significantly in 2025 from a high of 471 in 2024. As 2026 got underway, the downward trend continued but unfortunately, a number of recent crashes have pushed us into the tie zone with 2025 figures. In Lisa Kons' recent [blog](#), she reflects on increasing traffic safety messaging to curb risky driving behaviors. July is peak travel time and the middle of the 100 Deadliest Days. Drivers are vulnerable to the triple-play risks of excessive speed, impairment and distraction. This issue features helpful resources with the goal of putting traffic safety results into the win column.

MINNESOTA TRAFFIC FATALITIES  
January 1 – June 30



Source: MN Dept. of Public Safety \*Preliminary

## Preventing Vehicle Theft



July is [National Vehicle Theft Prevention Month](#), a perfect time to remind others that curbing thefts and preventing theft-related crashes starts with thwarting thieves. In 2024, 850,000 vehicles were stolen in the U.S. — one every 37 seconds.

Thieves also create safety risks on the road — stolen cars are often driven recklessly, resulting in high-speed police chases and crashes that endanger the public.

Always take your vehicle's key/fob with you when you park, make sure your doors/windows are locked, never leave valuables in your vehicle, and never leave it running unattended.

[The Minnesota Department of Public Safety](#) provides online resources to help victims of motor vehicle related crimes.

[The Minnesota Commerce Department](#) has an Auto Theft Prevention Toolkit with graphics, videos, talking points, and more.

## Motorcycle Fatalities on the Rise

A concerning trend has emerged on Minnesota roads — motorcycle fatalities have increased in 2026 to record highs. 34 motorcyclists have lost their lives as of this mid-year reporting period, the highest number recorded for this period over the past seven years. By comparison, the next highest total was 24 fatalities midway through the year in 2022.



These numbers serve as a stark reminder of the importance of safe riding practices and driver awareness. As motorcycle travel increases during the summer months, all road users are encouraged to stay alert, avoid distractions, and watch carefully for motorcycles at intersections and when changing lanes. Make sure to share these free resources:

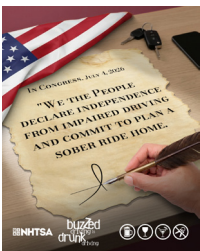
- [Drive Safe MN Motorcycle Campaign](#)
- [Lane Splitting/Filtering Infographic](#)
- [MN OTS Motorcycle Safety Center](#)
- [NHTSA Motorcycle Safety Materials](#)



## Stars, Stripes and Safer Roads

When our nation was founded, the greatest travel risks were being thrown from a horse or getting stuck on muddy roads. As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, the advances that allow us to easily travel across the country have also brought the persistent risk of death and injury in motor vehicle crashes. 579 people were killed in traffic crashes during the July 4th holiday period in 2024 — 38% of those drivers were drunk. Of the 1,724 drivers killed from 2020–2024, the 21–34 age group had the highest percentage of drunk drivers at 47%.

NHTSA has expanded its July 4th traffic safety campaigns to highlight the dangers of impaired driving. The holiday period between June 29 and July 5 will also feature additional law enforcement along with paid and earned media. The campaigns below are suitable for traffic safety departments and associations, communities, law enforcement and others. They include resources like holiday-themed graphics, social media posts, talking points and news releases in English and Spanish.



**Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving**



**If You Feel Different, You Drive Different**



**Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over**



**Drive High, Get a DUI**

## Coming Up



**JULY 3–31**

### **NHTSA Speeding Catches Up With You Campaign**

Remind drivers that their speed impacts everyone on the road. The campaign includes paid media, enforcement, and resources — many are available in both English and Spanish. Find more speeding prevention tools at [DriveSafeMN](#).

**JULY 12–18**

### **Operation Safe Driver Week**

A joint U.S./Canada event from the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance targets dangerous driving by both commercial drivers and passenger vehicle drivers. Law enforcement will identify unsafe driving and issue citations or warnings.

**JULY 20–21**

### **United Nations Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety**

This event will bring together government officials and experts to advance progress in meeting the goal of halving road deaths and injuries by 2030 (Decade of Action for Road Safety).

## SUMMER BOATING

### **MN DNR Boat Safety**



Remember that boats are vehicles, too — speeding, distraction and impairment contribute to crashes, injuries and deaths on the water. Alcohol is involved in about 30% of fatal boat accidents in Minnesota. Always wear a life jacket and make sure children wear theirs.



**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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