



Alcohol  
and Gambling  
Enforcement

ARMER/911  
Program

Bureau of  
Criminal  
Apprehension

Driver  
and Vehicle  
Services

Homeland  
Security and  
Emergency  
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Minnesota  
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Office of  
Communications

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Justice Programs

Office of  
Traffic Safety

State Fire  
Marshal and  
Pipeline Safety

## Office of the Commissioner

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The Department of Public Safety administers programs to protect the safety of Minnesota citizens. Traffic crashes are a leading public safety problem — each year, hundreds of people die and thousands more are injured in crashes. The experience of the last few decades suggests that much of this suffering is preventable.

Our perspective is that traffic crashes are not “accidents.” They are tragic events that do not have to occur, but rather can be prevented by changes in human behavior. History proves that human behavioral factors contribute greatly to incidence of traffic crashes.

Fortunately, changes in the same behavioral factors can reduce the seriousness of crashes. The department’s advice is to be conscious of the leading factors in traffic crashes: driver inattention, driving at illegal or unsafe speeds, and driving while impaired. Also, a critically important factor in the prevention of death and injury in a crash is the use of safety equipment, including safety belts, child restraint seats, and helmets for motorcyclists and bicyclists.

The Department of Public Safety is responsible for reducing crashes, injuries and fatalities, and the tremendous cost of all vehicle crashes, which is about \$2 billion each year in Minnesota. To that end, we are working with other state agencies, private organizations and other stakeholders in moving Minnesota [\*Toward Zero Deaths\*](#). This collaborative program addresses traffic safety issues through the application of the “Four Es” — education, enforcement, engineering and emergency services.

While reaching zero traffic deaths may not be attainable in our lifetime, it is a goal. And the operative word to measure our progress is “towards.” The loss of more than 600 lives each year in crashes is unacceptable. In its specific role, the Department of Public Safety can, and will, reduce that number through public education and aggressive law enforcement.

Ultimately, the greatest factor in reducing crashes is individual driver behavior. Every Minnesota motorist can reduce crashes by obeying traffic laws, using safety equipment, and exercising patience behind the wheel. Collectively, we can reduce crashes and their consequences and drive *Towards Zero Deaths*.

Sincerely,

Michael Campion  
Commissioner