



# Ortonville Police Department

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## NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 10, 2011

### **HEAR THE SEAT BELT REMINDER DING? BUCKLE UP — OR HEAR SIRENS**

#### *Extra Seat Belt Enforcement in October*

The Ortonville Police Department will be conducting increased *Click It or Ticket* seat belt patrols during one of the state's largest belt enforcement campaigns of the year, October 14–27. The campaign aims to increase belt use to stop preventable deaths and injuries.

In Big Stone County during the last three years, zero unbelted motorists were killed and two were seriously injured. Statewide during this same period, 409 unbelted motorists were killed and 814 suffered serious, life-altering injuries.

Seat belts must be worn correctly — low and snug across the hips; shoulder straps should never be tucked under an arm or behind the back.

“Believe us, the last thing we want to do is write seat belt tickets,” says Ortonville Chief of Police Jason Mork. “That’s why we are reminding motorists to buckle up. We want you to avoid meeting us, and more importantly, avoid getting hurt or killed.”

Chief Mork adds that motorists are the first line of enforcing the law by speaking up and insisting that all passengers are belted. “It may not be cool or easy to nag everyone to buckle up, but it’s a lot easier than dealing with the consequences.”

The enforcement effort will also include a nighttime seat belt enforcement focus. Each year, more than 60 percent of the nighttime fatalities (9 p.m.–3 a.m.) are not buckled up.

According to Chief Mork, a seat belt is a motorist’s best defense in case of a crash. He notes that in rollover crashes, unbelted motorists are usually ejected from the vehicle. In most cases, the vehicle will roll over them. Often, unbelted motorists will crack teeth out on steering wheels or break their nose, and even slam into and injure or kill others in the vehicle.

Ortonville Police Department officers will enforce the state’s primary seat belt law during the effort. The primary law requires passengers in all seating positions, including the back seat, to be buckled up or seated in the correct child restraint. Officers will stop and ticket unbelted drivers or passengers. A seat belt fine is \$25 but can cost more than \$100 with court and administrative fees.

The primary law has helped the state achieve a record-high daytime seat belt compliance rate of 92 percent.

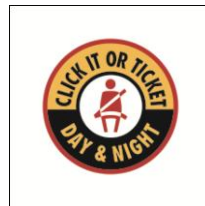
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The campaign will also include enforcement of Minnesota’s strengthened child passenger safety law which requires children to use a booster seat starting after they have outgrown a forward-facing harnessed restraint (typically 40–60 pounds, depending on seat’s weight limitations). Children should remain in a booster until they are age 8 or 4 feet 9 inches tall — whichever comes first. It is recommended, however, to keep a child in a booster based on their height rather than age. Boosters help adult seat belts fit children correctly.

Belt use is especially an issue in Greater Minnesota communities. Annually, nearly 80 percent of unbelted traffic deaths occur on Greater Minnesota roads.

The *Click It or Ticket* seat belt enforcement campaign is a component of the state’s *Toward Zero Death (TZD)* initiative. A primary vision of the *TZD* program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. *TZD* focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes — education, enforcement, engineering and emergency trauma response.



**“To Serve and Protect”**