



## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **STATE PATROL TO STEP UP COMMERCIAL VEHICLE ENFORCEMENT OCT. 20-26**

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Minnesota State Patrol Commercial Vehicle Section is stepping up traffic enforcement activity statewide Oct. 20-26 as part of a nationwide effort to increase commercial and passenger vehicle driver awareness.

During Operation Safe Driver Week, commercial vehicle drivers can expect an increase in seat belt enforcement, driver roadside inspections and regulatory compliance. Motorists can expect stepped up traffic enforcement aimed at driving conduct near commercial vehicles.

The campaign serves as an opportunity to increase awareness to the motoring public, especially teenage and younger drivers, about safe driving practices around large trucks and buses. In addition, the State Patrol is using the week to increase awareness to commercial drivers and motorists of the dangers of distracted driving.

Last year, 395 people lost their lives as the result of traffic crashes in Minnesota. Fifty-six of the 395 deaths were the result of crashes involving commercial trucks. There were 3,789 total crashes last year involving commercial trucks, resulting in 1,178 injuries.

“Crashes involving commercial and passenger vehicles often have a life-changing effect on everyone involved,” says Capt. Matt Sokol, State Patrol Commercial Vehicle Section. “We ask commercial drivers and the motoring public to protect yourself and those around you by sharing the road and avoiding distracted driving.”

#### **Motorist Tips When Driving Near a Big Truck:**

- Stay out of the No-Zone—No-Zones are blind spots where a car disappears from the view of the truck driver.
- Stay visible—Large trucks need a much longer braking distance than a car. Don't cut into a truck's space; if this happens, it reduces a truck's much needed breaking distance and restricts evasive action.
- Don't tailgate a truck—The farther you are away from a truck, the less likely you will be involved in a collision.
- Don't speed—Obey all speed limits.
- Allow plenty of room—Large trucks are almost as wide as your lane of travel. Pacing too close behind one prevents you from reacting to changing traffic conditions and patterns.
- Buckle up—Wearing your seat belt is the single most important thing you can do to save your life in a crash.

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**About the Minnesota Department Public Safety**

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) comprises 11 divisions where 2,100 employees operate programs in the areas of law enforcement, crime victim assistance, traffic safety, alcohol and gambling, emergency communications, fire safety, pipeline safety, driver licensing, vehicle registration and emergency management. DPS activity is anchored by three core principles: education, enforcement and prevention.

**About the Minnesota State Patrol**

More than 500 Minnesota State Patrol troopers are the foundation of the agency that works to provide a safe environment on Minnesota's roads by assisting motorists, taking enforcement action, and educating drivers about traffic safety issues. In addition to road safety activities, troopers conduct flight patrols, search and rescue missions, and assist other law enforcement agencies.

In 1929, the Minnesota Legislature created the Highway Patrol after lawmakers recognized the need for a traffic enforcement agency in response to the boom of automobiles. The first patrol force comprised 35 men. In 1970, the Highway Patrol became a division of the Department of Public Safety, and four years later its official name was changed to the Minnesota State Patrol.

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