

# The Connector



May 2015

## Message from WisDOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb

Safety is a primary concern for WisDOT and the department uses engineering, education and enforcement to support traffic safety throughout the state. Calendar year 2014 saw the lowest number of traffic fatalities since 1943. Unfortunately, we're seeing a troubling trend in 2015 with traffic deaths up significantly from this same time last year. If we all do our part, we can make progress toward our ultimate goal of reducing the number of preventable traffic deaths to Zero In Wisconsin. As we enter another busy summer travel and road construction season, please buckle-up, drive sober and alert and be prepared to slow down and move over for roadside workers.

## May is National Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month

### Drivers urged to share the road, riders urged to get licensed

More than a half million Wisconsin residents have a motorcycle license or permit, and many of them have already started this year's riding season. As motorcycles continue to grow in popularity among men and women of all ages, safety is a constant concern. Last year, 73 motorcycle riders and passengers died in Wisconsin traffic crashes.

"May is National Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, which is an opportunity to remind motorists to share the road and watch for motorcycles especially at intersections and while making turns and lane changes," says Greg Patzer, manager of the Wisconsin Motorcycle Safety Program (WMSP). "Drivers can easily misjudge the speed and distance of an approaching motorcycle because of its smaller dimensions. To prevent crashes, drivers should check the position of a motorcycle at least two or three times before they proceed through an intersection or make a turn."



To protect themselves and others on the road, motorcyclists are legally required to have a motorcycle endorsement on their driver license. Nearly 42 percent of motorcyclists' fatalities in 2013 involved riders who had not completed the safety training or skills test required to obtain a motorcycle endorsement on their license. Motorcyclists can obtain their motorcycle endorsement in two ways:

- Pass a written test and a road test at a DMV service center.
- Successfully complete an eligible rider education course that waives the requirement for the DMV road test. More information about [rider education courses](#)--from beginner to advanced--is available online.

To help promote rider education, the WMSP is teaming up with ABATE of Wisconsin, a motorcycle riders' advocacy group, to distribute hang-tags that dealers can display on their motorcycles in showrooms urging riders to get endorsed. In addition, the WMSP will use radio and TV public service announcements, billboards and social media to remind motorcycle riders and drivers to share the road. Electronic message signs on major highways this riding season will urge motorists to look twice for motorcycles.

Patzer emphasizes that motorcyclists need to make responsible decisions to reduce their risks of serious or fatal injuries. "Motorcyclists must obey all traffic laws, such as speed limits, and never ride while impaired. They should always wear protective and conspicuous clothing and gear, including a helmet that meets or exceeds US DOT standards. Tragically, approximately two out of three motorcyclists who died in crashes from 2009 to 2013 were not wearing helmets."

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## Click It or Ticket kicks off intensified safety belt enforcement

Hundreds of law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin will be watching for unbuckled drivers and passengers during the annual Click It or Ticket mobilization from May 18 to 31.

In addition to law enforcement efforts to increase compliance with Wisconsin's safety belt law, WisDOT is using federal funding to broadcast TV, radio and web messages statewide urging everyone to buckle up. The messages feature Donald Driver, the Green Bay Packers' all-time leading receiver who also is a "driver who always wears his seat belt." A new video of Driver quizzing some unsuspecting Wisconsin drivers about their seat belt use will be launched on social media. In addition, people can complete a fun and informative online traffic safety quiz at [zeroinwisconsin.gov](http://zeroinwisconsin.gov) for a chance to win a Donald Driver autographed football.

Approximately 85 percent of Wisconsin motorists wear a seat belt, which is an all-time high in the state. However, more than half of the drivers and passengers killed in crashes last year were not buckled up.

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## 70 mph speed limit signed into law

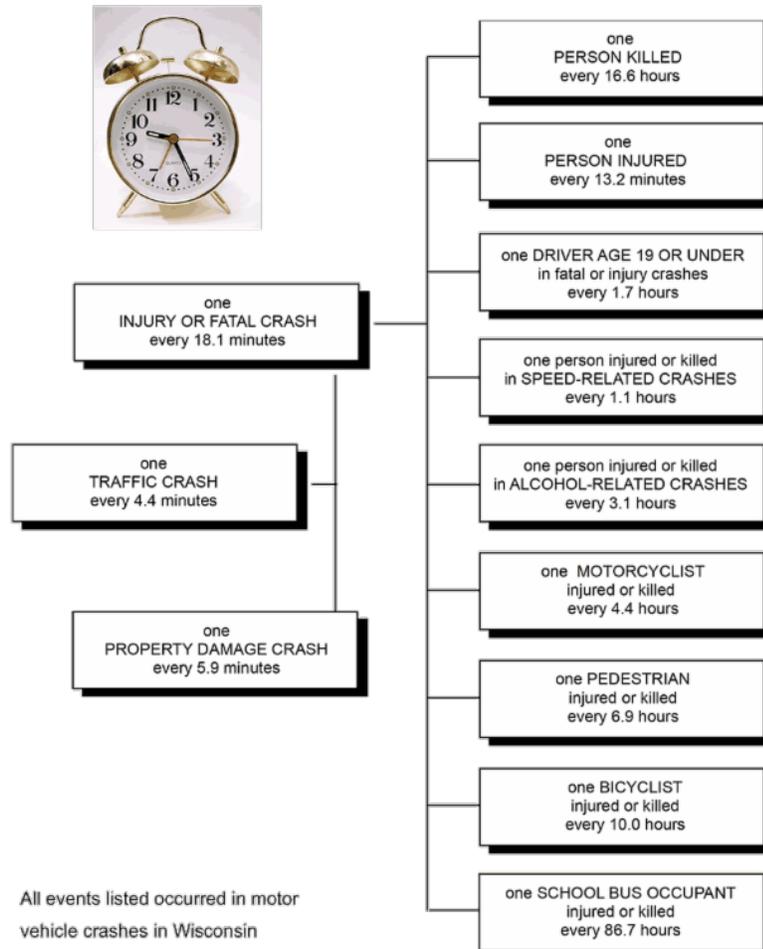
WisDOT will oversee installation of about 470 new speed limit and related signs along 726 miles of rural Interstate in Wisconsin now that the 70 mph speed limit has been signed into law. The 70 mph speed limit will not take effect until a specific highway segment is posted at the higher speed. Drivers are asked to be alert, to slow down and move over for county highway crews as they install the new signs along rural Interstates beginning next month. WisDOT is reminding motorists:

- Posted speed limits apply when travel conditions are ideal. State law requires drivers to adjust their speed to what is "reasonable and prudent" based on travel conditions. Factors such as snow, rain, construction or heavy traffic require reduced speeds.
  - The state's Move Over Law requires drivers to slow down or move over any time they see highway maintenance vehicles, law enforcement, other emergency responders or tow trucks stopped along the highway with warning lights flashing. Violations can result in a \$263 citation.
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## Spring 2015 Safety Report

WisDOT recently released a report highlighting progress made toward safer Wisconsin roads. The [Spring 2015 Safety Report](#) is one component of the quarterly MAPSS Performance Improvement Report, which rates how well the department is doing in the five core goal areas of mobility, accountability, preservation, safety and service. The report highlights WisDOT performance measures related to traffic fatalities, traffic crashes, traffic injuries and seat belt usage. The report shows Wisconsin's current seat belt use is at an all-time high of 84.7 percent. The department has a goal to reach a compliance rate of 86 percent by 2016. Currently, Wisconsin lags behind Michigan and Illinois who boast a 90 percent usage rate.

### Wisconsin's Highway Safety Clock



Wisconsin's Highway Safety Clock at right shows the tragic consequences of traffic crashes.



The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's MAPSS Performance Improvement Program reviews performance measures for five key goal areas that guide us in achieving our mission - mobility, accountability, preservation, safety and service. To check out the latest online reports, simply click on the MAPSS logo.

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