



Sept. 15, 2023  
For immediate release

## **Rice County Public Health, Safe Roads Coalition remind residents about seat belts and child restraints campaign: Sept. 17-23**

Driving in greater Minnesota can be a welcome contrast to metro driving. What isn't different is the need to buckle up and ensure children are in the correct car seat!

The statewide Click It or Ticket campaign, held Sept. 17-23, provides extra enforcement of the life-saving seat belt law and to remind motorists to drive smart.

Most Minnesotans make the decision to buckle up, but in 2022, preliminary data indicate 87 unbelted motorists died on Minnesota roads. And restraint use among children is associated with the driver's seat belt use. Parents and caregivers need to set a good example by always wearing their seat belt and ensuring that their passengers are transported correctly.

Rice County Public Health and Rice County Safe Roads Coalition reminds everyone that Minnesota law states that drivers and passengers in all seating positions must wear seat belts or be in the correct child restraint.

Parents need to take the time to make sure their child is properly restrained and that they are using the correct car seat or booster seat for their child's size and age.

"We are asking parents to take the time to review the recommendations so car seats and boosters are properly installed, so they are using the correct restraint for their child, and to be a good role model for their child and buckle-up. We want everyone riding in vehicles to be as safe as possible," says Deb Purfeerst, Director of Rice County Public Health.

### **Minnesota child car seat law and steps:**

- In Minnesota, all children must be in a child restraint until they are 4 feet, 9 inches tall, or at least age 8, whichever comes first.
- Rear-facing seats – Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible. Your child should remain in a rear-facing car seat until they reach the top height or weight limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer.
- Forward-facing seats with harness - Once your child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, your child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether. Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer.
- Booster seats – Use after outgrowing a forward-facing harnessed restraint; safest to remain in a booster until 4 feet 9 inches or at least age 8, whichever comes first.



- Seat belts - Use when children can sit with their back against the vehicle seat and have their knees bent comfortably over the edge with their feet touching the floor.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to visit the Minnesota Department of Public Safety website for Child Passenger Safety at [dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/child-passenger-safety/Pages/default.aspx](https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/child-passenger-safety/Pages/default.aspx) for more information.

Rice County Public Health has a limited supply of car seats available for families who lack financial resources to purchase a car seat, and a certified car seat technician on staff to help answer questions. Call Sara Coulter at Rice County Public Health with questions or for more information at 507-332-5910.

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