

WAYFINDER

A Message from the Director:

Focus on Driving Safety

As the fall and winter months approach, it's critical to continue spreading the word about safe driving. Last month, Nebraska saw a 28 percent increase in fatalities compared to September of last year. Tragically, almost half of these individuals were not wearing seatbelts. And compared to this time last year, the state is already up 20 percent in total fatalities. These numbers are a sobering reminder that every choice made behind the wheel matters.

NDOT is leading the way with the Buckle Up Phone Down program, promoting seatbelt use and reducing distractions to help prevent crashes and save lives. This safety initiative encourages drivers to buckle up and put their phones down, raising awareness about how these two simple actions can prevent crashes and reduce injuries. Whether it's down the street or across the country, buckling your seatbelt and putting your phone away are two of the most impactful choices any driver can make.

October is an important time to reflect on and reinforce other critical road safety topics. It's Pedestrian Safety Month, reminding everyone to stay vigilant, especially with Halloween coming soon. Whether driving through neighborhoods or busier areas, be on the lookout for children and pedestrians. Also, next month marks Crash Responder Safety Week (November 18-22), a time to honor the lifesaving work our first responders do and to remind drivers to move over and slow down when they see emergency vehicles on the road.

Let's make sure this conversation about safety doesn't stop here. Talk with your family, friends and neighbors about the importance of staying safe on the road—every conversation could help save a life.



OCTOBER

- 1-31** Pedestrian Safety Month
- 20-26** Teen Driver Safety Week
- 21-25** National School Bus Safety Week
- 30** Buckle Up Phone Down Day
- 31** Halloween

NOVEMBER

- 11** Veterans Day - NDOT Closed
- 18-22** Crash Responder Safety Week
- 28-29** Thanksgiving - NDOT Closed
- 11/29-12/10** Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Impaired Driving Crackdown

IT UPDATE

Your STN\@nebraska.gov account is frequently locking out. Find the solution [here](#).



We'd like to hear from you. If you have an update to share, please send it to ndot.wayfinder@nebraska.gov for consideration.

New Agreement Strengthens Panhandle Incident Response



Deputy-Director Mick Syslo

At the end of September, NDOT and the Nebraska State Patrol joined first responders from Banner, Cheyenne, Deuel, Kimball and Scotts Bluff counties to celebrate the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. This agreement formalized new Traffic Incident Management (TIM) partnerships in the Nebraska Panhandle, a significant step toward enhancing the safety, reliability and efficiency of our roadways statewide.

Traffic incidents—such as crashes or stalled vehicles—not only disrupt traffic flow but also pose serious risks to everyone on the road. TIM brings together first responders, 911 dispatchers, traffic management centers, and towing professionals to detect, respond to, and clear incidents quickly and safely, minimizing both delays and hazards for drivers.



Elkhorn North High School won the 2023-2024 Buckle Up Phone Down Cup in both the Class B All-School Division and the Girls Division.

NDOT's Buckle Up Phone Down initiative is designed to educate people on the dangers of distracted driving and promote seatbelt usage. The initiative asks drivers to do two simple but vital things: buckle up and put down their phones while driving. The goal of Buckle Up Phone Down is to see a decrease in distracted driving crashes and a raise in seat belt usage throughout the state.

In 2023, NDOT became a supporting partner of the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) and launched the Buckle Up Phone Down Cup Program. Each year, the NSAA awards a cup to the most successful high school activity programs in the state based on their championship performance. So far, 12 cups have been awarded to 8 different schools across Nebraska. Starting in November, NDOT teammates will be at various NSAA State Championships to promote Buckle Up Phone Down.