



**Police Department**

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Press Release

3/8/10

As a participant in the Iowa Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau program the North Liberty Police Dept. conducted a survey in early March of seat belt usage by motorists in North Liberty. The survey was conducted over a 3 day period at 3 different locations within the city. 94% of drivers and front seat passengers observed were wearing their seat belt. This exceeds the 2009 Iowa usage of 93% and the 2009 national usage rate of 84%.

The North Liberty Police Dept. commends the motorists who utilize safety belts and strongly encourages those who do not use safety belts to begin doing so. Iowa's percentage of speed-related traffic fatalities ranks the lowest in the nation and seat belt usage ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation but there is still room for improvement.

During 2005-2007, 61% of all vehicle occupants killed in night time crashes were not using a seat belt and 43% of day time fatalities were not using seat belts. During 1987-2009, 4300 people not using a seat belt were killed versus 2900 killed who were utilizing a belt. The figures for 2009 show 150 unbelted people were killed in Iowa while 140 belted people were killed. The Iowa DOT maintains a "Life Toll" and from July 1986 to February 2010 6,230 people's names have been recorded who avoided death or life threatening injuries simply by wearing their seat belt.

Not only is there evidence that seat belt usage saves lives and reduces the risk of serious injury there is also a financial benefit. In July 1987, the Iowa Insurance Division ordered insurance companies to reduce auto liability premiums 5% because insurance losses had been reduced which has been attributed to the implementation of Iowa's seat belt law. This has led to an estimated \$11 million saving per year for Iowans on insurance premiums. The other financial benefit to wearing your seat belt is to not have to pay a total fine of \$93.75 for a violation of the safety belt law; but more importantly it may save your life one day.