

The Crime Reporter



Sponsored by TRICOM: Winnebago County Citizens, Businesses and Law Enforcement
Working Together on Crime Prevention, Health and Safety

July/August 2010 Edition

Seat belt safety

Safety belt use in Wisconsin is...

Behind the national average and neighboring states

- Currently, Wisconsin's safety belt use rate is approximately 74 percent, which is one of the lowest in the nation (48th out of 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico) and well below the national average of 83 percent.
- Wisconsin is also behind neighboring states including Michigan and Illinois, which have safety belt use rates of more than 90 percent.

An incredibly effective and simple way to save lives

- Consistent safety belt use is the single most effective way to protect people from being ejected from a vehicle or being thrown around violently inside it during a crash.
- In Wisconsin, a 10 percent increase in safety belt use would save about 44 lives and prevent 650 injuries each year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- Teen safety belt use is much lower than other age groups. This lack of safety belt use coupled with a lack of driving experience is a major reason why traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for young people nationwide.

Costing all of us lots of money for unbelted motorists in crashes:

- Drivers and passengers who are hurt or killed in traffic crashes because they didn't buckle up create tremendous economic losses, such as medical expenses and lost worker productivity. The rest of society pays for nearly 75 percent of these economic losses through higher insurance premiums, taxes, and other public funding, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.
- Each Wisconsin traffic fatality costs nearly \$1.2 million and each incapacitating injury approximately \$67,400 based on National Safety Council estimates. In 2008, economic losses from traffic fatalities and injuries in Wisconsin were nearly \$2 billion, according to the [2008 Wisconsin Traffic Crash Facts](#).



Established in 1994, the Tri-Communities Crime Reduction Coalition,

TRICOM, is a coalition that brings together the law enforcement, business and citizen communities. TRICOM is committed to health, safety and crime-prevention. Its Visions is: "One community focused upon a caring safety-conscious, health-driven and crime-free environment."

In order to make the communities of Winnebago County safe and crime-free, the Mission of TRICOM is to identify gaps in crime prevention services, conduct research on needs and programs to fill these gaps, be a networking hub and connector of resources that enhance the work of its partner organizations, and enhance community involvement opportunities in crime prevention and safe neighborhood programs.

For further information about TRICOM contact Chairman Dan Hinton at (920)236-4820 or (920)727-2882 ext. 4820.



Residents who believe that crime prevention is a good investment have a new option: The **Winnebago County Crime Prevention**

Fund is an endowment fund, established to provide lasting financial support for crime prevention activities throughout Winnebago County. The fund is an initiative of the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation and all law enforcement agencies throughout Winnebago County. For more information contact the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation at (920) 426-3993.

Be a mentor to a child. You can make a difference!

You can be a Best Friend and make the world better... one child at a time. Call Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha at (920)729-5600 for more information.



TRIAD

Don't Wait, Get Involved Soon...

TRIAD is a national program that unites police, sheriff and seniors to share experiences and prepare to

defend against frauds and scams or other senior issues. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life of older adults, through education and active participation in statewide programs and projects, by partnering with Law Enforcement, Senior Serving Agencies and Seniors to help reduce criminal victimization of older adults.

We are ALWAYS looking for new members to join us.

Be Observant – Call About Crime!



CALL 1-800-621-CASH (2274)

www.winnebago crimestoppers.org

center or you call the Winnebago County-Wide Crime Stoppers at 1-800-621-CASH (2274) or go to the website at www.winnebago county crimestoppers.org REMAIN ANONYMOUS! Cash rewards up to \$1000 if your information leads to the arrest or conviction of a criminal. Help protect your community and others, get involved to make Winnebago County a safer and more secure community.

Please help law enforcement, if you see a crime in progress call the Winnebago County Emergency 911

Safety devices required when towing trailers

A 19-year-old Wisconsin woman was killed April 20 when her car was hit by a trailer that broke away from a pick-up truck and then crossed the centerline on a highway near Green Bay. To prevent this type of tragedy from killing another innocent victim, the Wisconsin State Patrol and other law enforcement agencies are urging motorists to ensure their boats, campers, trailers and other pieces of towed equipment are always securely fastened to their vehicles.

"For safe towing on roadways, state law requires that the ball and hitch coupling assembly must match exactly and fit securely," says State Patrol Superintendent David Collins. "Two safety chains of proper length and strength also must be attached between the vehicle and the trailer. The slack on each length of chain must not be more than is necessary to permit proper turning. A violation of this state law costs \$200.50 with two demerit points added to a driver's license."

The State Patrol also offers some simple and practical advice for safe towing. Superintendent Collins says, "Before you head up north or to other parts of Wisconsin with your boat, camper or trailer, check to see if it is loaded properly and its contents are secured. A shifting load on a trailer can cause it to sway unexpectedly. You also should check the axles and tires. Many trailers sit all winter long, and we see crashes caused by axles seizing or tires blowing. You should carry a spare tire because specialty tires for trailers may be hard to find when you're far from home and it's the middle of the night."

Is speeding worth the risk of death, injury, money and time?

The combination of pleasant weather, ample daylight, and clear pavement can make driving conditions in June nearly perfect. But these ideal conditions also can give drivers a false sense of security and tempt them to ignore speed limits. All too often, giving into this temptation has disastrous consequences. A person is killed or injured in a speed-related crash in Wisconsin approximately every 46 minutes, according to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

"At higher speeds, you're at greater risk of a crash. In addition, the violence of a crash becomes more severe as speeds increase," says State Patrol Superintendent David Collins. "Drivers traveling at high speeds for an extended period of time on the open road also tend to not slow down sufficiently when approaching an intersection, construction zone or traffic congestion."

Speeding can be expensive as well as dangerous. Under Wisconsin law, the costs of speeding citations range from \$175 all the way up to \$893 along with three to six demerit points assessed on the driver's record. A citation for driving 25 mph or more over the limit in a 55 or 65 mph zone requires a 15-day driver's license suspension.

Despite the obvious dangers and expense of speeding, it is by far the most common traffic conviction in Wisconsin. Last year, drivers amassed more than 200,000 speeding convictions statewide.

Many people speed in a futile attempt to get where they're going a little sooner. But as Superintendent Collins points out, "You're actually going to be delayed significantly if you're stopped by a law enforcement officer or are involved in a crash because you were speeding."

Be Educated, Be Involved, Take a Stance in your Neighborhood

The key to safety in your neighborhood realistically is just being a good neighbor. Do you know the names/faces of those who live next door? Would you be suspicious if a moving truck pulled in next door and started loading up televisions and stereos? Does an adult in a car asking questions of a small child on the sidewalk strike you as odd? Have you ever answered the door to find someone selling meat or offering to do home improvements? These are all situations the police would find suspicious and we would prefer to investigate them while they are occurring instead of after someone becomes victimized. The police department needs all neighborhoods to have citizens who will take an interest in their neighborhoods and their neighbors. Neighborhood watch groups were started to break down barriers and unite people toward a common goal of safety near your home. Tricom, your citizen's crime prevention coalition, suggests wherever you live contact your local crime prevention officer to initiate a neighborhood watch in your neighborhood. We are not asking anyone to get personally involved in investigating suspicious activity. Rather, call the police when you see suspicious activity occurring. By joining forces we can make all of the communities in Winnebago County safer places to live.

For more information about Neighborhood Watch Programs:

In *Menasha*
call 967-3500



In *Neenah*
call 886-6000



In *Oshkosh*
call 236-5742



In *Town of Menasha*
call 720-7109



Elsewhere in *Winnebago County* call 236-7309



Thank-you to the businesses that allow us to distribute The Crime Reporter and to TRIAD members and Melanie Hunt for their help in preparing the newsletter.