

# Dept. of Transportation: Wisconsin launches Buckle Up Phone Down campaign to save lives

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Wisconsin officials are challenging the community to put safety first, help prevent crashes, and save lives on state roads and highways.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) new Buckle Up Phone Down campaign asks everyone to show support for two simple measures: use a seat belt every time you get in the car and stay off your phone while driving.

"The safety of everyone in Wisconsin is our top priority," Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes said. "Distracted driving and not wearing your seat belt can be deadly. But these devastating incidents can be prevented. Everyone can do two simple things that may save their lives: Buckle Up Phone Down."

Cell phone use is one of the biggest distractions while driving. Distracted driving was a factor in almost 9,000 crashes in the state last year, including 31 deaths.

WisDOT reports 11% of drivers in Wisconsin did not buckle up in 2020. Unbuckled drivers and passengers made up 44% of all fatalities last year.

"Our officers see tragedies like these on the roads every day," Wisconsin State Patrol Superintendent Tony Burrell said. "Many of us are so used to being in a vehicle that we feel safe and forget about the terrible destruction that can occur from just a moment's inattention, but we must do better."

Wisconsin businesses, organizations, schools, communities, and individuals are invited to take the Buckle Up Phone Down pledge.

“We need everyone to join us,” WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson said. “The collective effort of each individual and organization will bring change and create safer roads in Wisconsin. Every person who takes the pledge demonstrates their commitment to the health and well-being of their communities and all the people of our state.”

People of all ages in Wisconsin can commit to saving lives by taking the pledge at [wisconsindot.gov/BUPD](https://wisconsindot.gov/BUPD). Participants are encouraged to share a thumbs up/thumbs down photo on social media using the hashtag #BuckleUpPhoneDown then challenge friends, family and coworkers to do the same.

The Buckle Up Phone Down initiative originated in Missouri in 2017. In the first two years, seat belt use in that state increased by 6.3% after more than 10,000 businesses and individuals accepted the challenge. Now, the initiative is underway in six other states, including Wisconsin, with 12 more considering campaigns.