

News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Campaign for Safe Driving in Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is encouraging residents to prevent injuries by driving safely. Motor vehicle accidents are one of the highest causes of injury to teens and young adults. These injuries can be prevented by wearing a seat belt and avoiding distracted driving.

“Please put your phone down and buckle up for the safety of yourself and others on the road,” states Sarah Minnick, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “These two simple actions are the best way to lower your risk of getting injured in an accident or of injuring someone else.”

Distracted driving can be anything that takes your attention away from the road, especially texting or scrolling social media. Texting and driving means you are 23 times more likely to have a crash while driving. Last year there were 3,405 Nebraska drivers involved in distracted driving crashes.

Wearing a seat belt is proven to increase your chances of survival if you do get into an accident. More than 7 in 10 fatalities in passenger vehicles were unbuckled at the time of the crash, according to Nebraska’s Highway Safety Office.

- Nationwide the seat belt use rate is 92%.
- Nebraska’s seat belt use rate is 77%.

Seat belt usage rates are even lower in the nine counties of SWNPHD’s health district, with the lowest county rate sitting at 36%.

The Nebraska Highway Safety Office has provided funding to reduce occupant protection related injuries and fatalities in Nebraska. SWNPHD is using this funding to support youth and young adult seat belt education and distracted driving awareness with a public messaging campaign running from June 1, 2024, through September 30, 2024.

For more information contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website swhealth.ne.gov contains resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. Follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok.

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