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Kansas joins national drugged driving awareness campaign *“If you feel different, you drive different.”*

TOPEKA, Kan. – Impaired driving is reaching new highs – literally and figuratively. From April 16 - 20 (often known as 420 and popularized as a marijuana “holiday”), law enforcement agencies will crack down on the growing dangers of drugged driving and arrest those who violate the law.

With many state laws now legalizing recreational and medical marijuana use, including states bordering Kansas, more people are getting behind the wheel in an impaired state. However, it remains illegal to drive under the influence of drugs and alcohol in all 50 states. This month, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) campaign, “If you feel different, you drive different. Drive high, get a DUI,” is designed to raise awareness of the rising cases of drugged driving.

“Impaired driving is a growing problem both here in Kansas and across the country,” said Transportation Secretary Julie Lorenz. “Driving under the influence of illegal drugs impairs a person’s judgment, concentration and reaction time. It’s a serious danger to safety on our roadways.”

According to NHTSA, between 2009 and 2018, of those drivers killed in crashes and tested for marijuana, the presence of marijuana had nearly doubled. In 2019, 18%, of crash fatalities in Kansas involved a driver testing positive for at least one drug.

It’s become an increasing challenge to overcome the perception that it’s okay to drive while high, stoned or wasted. According to a 2016 Kansas poll conducted by AAA, only 63% of people consider driving after using illegal drugs to be a “very serious threat” to their safety.

“No matter what you believe, Kansans will see law enforcement agencies in full force on April 16 - 20 pulling over drivers that exhibit signs of impaired driving due to drugs or alcohol or both,” said KDOT Traffic Safety Program Manager Chris Bortz.

This safety campaign is funded by federal traffic safety funds administered by KDOT. For more information about drugged driving, visit www.KTSRO.org.

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