



Bureau of Transportation Safety  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Designate Sober Driver before Celebrating**

*Kansas Law Enforcement on the lookout for drunk drivers this holiday season*

**TOPEKA** – The holidays are a time to celebrate with friends and family, and create life-long memories. Unfortunately, the holidays can also be a time when motorists make poor decisions that lead to life-altering consequences. This holiday season, drivers need to take extra precautions to ensure they do not end up with an arrest or tragedy as part of those special memories.

That's the message from the Kansas Department of Transportation, which today announced the statewide "*Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.*" enforcement crackdown through the end of the holiday season. KDOT also wants motorists to remember that drunk driving laws are enforced whether the driver is 25 and leaving a bar at 2 a.m. or 45 and leaving an office party at 7 p.m.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in December 2007, 992 people were killed in crashes nationwide that involved a drunk driver or motorcycle rider with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher – above the legal limit in every state. In Kansas, there were nearly 3,300 alcohol-related crashes in 2007, resulting in 118 deaths.

"During this holiday season we wish everyone safe traveling and joyous times with family and friends. Unfortunately we realize holiday parties with family, friends and co-workers too often lead to excessive drinking," said Colonel Terry Maple, Superintendent of the Kansas Highway Patrol. "If you plan to celebrate by consuming alcoholic beverages, designate a sober driver. As always, our enforcement of alcohol laws will be very strict. If you choose to drive impaired, we will arrest you. No exceptions! No excuses!"

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“Kansas law is strict and clear on the penalty for drunk driving,” Kansas Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller said. “Drunk drivers face the loss of their driver’s license, higher insurance rates, jail time and multiple other expenses such as court costs, attorney fees and car towing.”

KDOT recommends designating a sober driver and not letting friends drive drunk as simple steps to avoid a tragic crash or an arrest for drunk driving. Other important tips include:

- Plan ahead: Whenever you plan on consuming alcohol, designate your sober driver before going out and give that person your keys.
- If you’ve been drinking, call a taxi, use mass transit or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely.
- Use your community’s Safe Ride program.
- Promptly report drunk drivers you see on the roadways to law enforcement.
- Wearing your seat belt or using protective gear on your motorcycle is your best defense against an impaired driver.

“Too many people continue to suffer tragic injuries and the loss of a loved one as a result of this serious crime,” Miller said. “Instead of spending the holidays in the morgue, a hospital bed or in a jail cell, drivers simply need to act responsibly.”

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