



STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY
P.O. BOX 1321
DOVER, DELAWARE 19903-1321
302-744-2743
www.state.de.us/highway

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: Andrea Summers
Community Relations Officer
302-744-2743

2 Killed and 7 Injured in DUI Crashes in Last Week *Highway Safety officials renew plea for drivers not to drink and drive*

Dover – Delaware Office of Highway Safety (OHS) officials are renewing their plea for drivers not to drive if they're under the influence of drugs or alcohol after two people were killed and another 7 injured in alcohol-related crashes that occurred over the last week. Highway Safety officials' concerns for a dangerous holiday season are growing as alcohol-related traffic deaths continue to climb. Since January 1st, 46% (or 52 of 113) of Delaware's traffic fatalities have involved alcohol.

"It's frustrating and frightening that people are willing to take that kind of gamble with their lives and the lives of innocent victims," said Andrea Summers, Community Relations Officer for the Office of Highway Safety. "These crashes are 100% preventable. Sadly there are far too many people who won't be around to enjoy the holidays with their families because of someone's irresponsible choice to drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol."

In the last week 33 people were arrested for Driving Under the Influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Thirteen of the DUI arrests came from DUI Saturation patrols while 20 resulted from statewide sobriety checkpoints. Additionally, 223 citations for aggressive driving behaviors were issued to drivers found violating the state's traffic laws.

Enhanced DUI and aggressive driving enforcement activities scheduled for the upcoming weekend of December 3rd – 9th include 40 DUI saturation patrols and three sobriety checkpoints. One of the checkpoints being held in Clayton on Saturday December 8th, will be dedicated to the memory of Lisa Pink and Keith Rogers, a mother and son who were struck and killed by an impaired driver in December of 2000.

Delaware State Police Troop 3 will also conduct a sobriety checkpoint on Saturday December 8th in the Dover area, and the New Castle County DUI Task Force will operate a sobriety checkpoint on Friday December 2nd in Newark.

The Office of Highway Safety has several activities occurring this week that are designed to educate people about the dangers of drinking and driving. OHS staff will deliver tree and wreath tags that have a safe and sober message on them, to Christmas tree stands statewide over the next several days. They say “Keep the holidays joyous. Please do not drink and drive.” Those who operate tree stands can place the tags on the tree for a responsible holiday safety message and put pricing on the blank back side of the tag.

OHS also has four Mocktail Parties scheduled for the week of December 3rd. Three of them, which are all in Sussex County, are open to the public. They are: Tuesday December 4th from noon - 2 p.m. at State Farm Insurance on Nassau Rd. in Lewes, Thursday December 6th from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Beebe Hospital cafeteria in Lewes, and Friday December 7th at Bayhealth Milford Memorial Hospital’s cafeteria also around lunch time. The fourth Mocktail will be held on Wednesday December 5th from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. for the employees of Avon in Newark, and Wilmington Trust in Rodney Square, Wilmington also held one on December 3rd for their employees.

Because two people were killed and 7 injured in alcohol-related crashes since Thanksgiving, the first two red light bulbs and seven more green bulbs will be added to each of the DUI Victim’s Trees located in the lobbies of the state’s DMV’s. This brings the total of those injured in DUI crashes since Thanksgiving Day in Delaware to 12. During the 2006 Safe Family Holiday campaign, 6 people were killed and 75 injured in alcohol-related crashes.

OHS is reminding you that you can make a difference and reduce traffic crashes. Always obey posted speed limits, come to complete stops at stop signs, slow down and prepare to stop when you see a yellow light and be a HERO – Be a Designated Driver, or make sure you appoint one before you go out for the evening if you plan to drink alcohol.

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