
2018 HOLIDAY DWI MOBILIZATION: PRE-ENFORCEMENT NEWS RELEASE

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CRASH AT A FRIENDS, NOT ON THE ROAD; FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS DRIVE IMPAIRED
Extra DWI Patrols During the Holidays on Northfield Roads Nov. 21 – Dec. 29

Northfield, Minn. – The holidays are filled with joy, happiness and time together with family and friends. Too often the joy turns to sorrow when a family is notified of a loved one's tragic death on Minnesota roads due to someone driving impaired.

To help keep families together this holiday season, **the Northfield Police Department** will be participating with law enforcement statewide in an extra DWI enforcement campaign running on weekends starting Nov. 21 through Dec. 29.

“As people host holiday parties, it's crucial for everyone to have a plan before consuming alcohol,” said **Sergeant Kevin Tussing**. “As your guests arrive, ask them about their plans, and if they don't have a plan, get them a ride home or offer them a bed for the night. It's much better to lie in a bed than a coffin.”

The Choice is Yours

The decision to get behind the wheel after drinking is costing too many people their lives. The choice to drive drunk has contributed to 28 deaths on Minnesota roads from the day before Thanksgiving through Dec. 30 in the last five years (2012-2017).

Holiday DWI Arrests (Day before Thanksgiving – Dec. 30)

Year	DWIs
2013	2,556
2014	2,565
2015	2,381
2016	2,271
2017	2,717
Total	12,490

DWI Arrests Year-Round

Year	DWIs
2013	26,014
2014	25,392
2015	25,374
2016	24,059
2017	24,862
Total	125,701

Holiday	Number of DWIs Per Hour (2013-2017)
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Halloween	4.0
Fourth of July	3.9
Labor Day	3.8
St. Paddy's Day	3.8
Memorial Day	3.6
Thanksgiving	3.6
New Year's Day	3.3
Super Bowl	3.2
Valentine's Day	3.2
Cinco de Mayo	3.0
Annual Average	2.9
Christmas	2.5

Blackout Wednesday Dangers

Blackout Wednesday (the day before Thanksgiving) is traditionally associated with a night of binge drinking. Many college students are returning home for a night of celebrating with friends and with no work on Thursday, many adults get together after a short work-week.

The Northfield Police Department calls Blackout Wednesday one of the most dangerous nights on the road in the state. Last year, 133 drivers were arrested for DWI during a 12 hour period on Blackout Wednesday (6 p.m. Wednesday – 6 a.m. Thanksgiving). For a typical 48 period (Wednesday-Thursday), roughly a 100 people are arrested in Minnesota for DWI.

DWI Consequences

- Loss of license for up to a year, thousands of dollars in costs and possible jail time.
- Repeat DWI offenders, as well as first-time offenders arrested at 0.16 and above alcohol-concentration level, must use [ignition interlock](#) in order to regain legal driving privileges or face at least one year without a driver's license.
- First-time offenders arrested at 0.16 and above are required to use interlock for one year.
- Offenders with three or more offenses are required to use interlock for three to six years, or they will never regain driving privileges.

Speak Up and Plan a Sober Ride

- Plan for a safe ride — designate a sober driver, use a safe, alternative transportation option, or stay at the location of the celebration.
- Speak up – Offer to be a designated driver or be available to pick up a loved one anytime, anywhere. If you see an impaired person about to get behind the wheel, get them a safe ride home.
- Buckle up — the best defense against a drunk driver.
- Report drunk driving — call 911 when witnessing impaired driving behavior. Be prepared to provide location, license plate number and observed dangerous behavior.

Local agencies participating in the statewide campaign are the Dundas, Faribault, Lonsdale and Northfield Police Departments along with the Rice County Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota State Patrol.

The enhanced DWI enforcement campaign is a component of the state's Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) program. The Minnesota departments of Public Safety, Transportation and Health collaborate on improving traffic safety for all. A primary vision of the TZD program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. TZD focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes – education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma response.

Definitions

- Driving While Impaired (DWI) is a violation for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Alcohol-related: any evidence of alcohol detected in a driver, pedestrian or bicyclist.
- Impaired-related: any driver, pedestrian or bicyclist with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or above.
- Drunk-driving-related: any driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or above.