

**PARTNER WITH SURROUNDING AREA AGENCIES OR SAFE COMMUNITY COALITIONS ON NEWS RELEASES TO AVOID DUPLICATION WHEN ISSUING TO MEDIA**

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**IMPAIRED DRIVERS TAKEN OFF THE ROAD BEFORE TURNING 2018  
INTO A PAINFUL MEMORY**

*5 DWI Arrests Made During Extra Enforcement in Northfield*

**Northfield**, Minn. – If alcohol is part of a person’s holiday celebrations, the outcome can be safe and non-eventful when they plan a sober ride. Drive impaired like the 5 motorists arrested for DWI in **Northfield** during the extra enforcement campaign, and the outcome can become more deadly and life-changing. Law enforcement officers took those drivers off the road to keep them safe as well as other Minnesotans and loved ones visiting from across the country.

More than 300 law enforcement agencies participated in the statewide extra holiday DWI enforcement campaign coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety. The campaign ran Nov. 21 and on weekends through Dec. 31.

*One officer had to avoid being struck head on by an impaired driver and that person was arrested for DWI and had a blood alcohol level of 0.19. The highest blood alcohol in Northfield during the wave was a 0.24.*

**Make the Wrong Choice. Face a Life-Changing Future.**

Minnesotans are increasingly planning a sober ride over the Christmas holiday, but motorists that choose to drive impaired remain a deadly threat during this season of celebration.

**Major Holiday DWIs per Hour**

<b>Holiday</b>	<b>DWIs per Hour (2013 – 2017)</b>
Fourth of July	3.9
Labor Day	3.8
Memorial Day	3.6
Thanksgiving	3.6
New Year’s Day	3.3
Christmas	2.5

Minnesotans need to plan ahead for sober rides even when traveling to friends and family’s homes for the holidays, not just when going to the bars. Christmas ranks high in the percentage of drunk driving-related fatalities (23 percent) during major holidays, only behind Labor Day (30 percent).

“Impaired drivers may not be getting behind the wheel intending to hurt anyone, but I’ve seen the horrific results of what can happen,” said **Sergeant Kevin Tussing**. “At that point, good intentions mean nothing when a life is lost or significantly changed. We want Minnesotans to make the right choice before they have to live with an outcome that no one should have to experience.”

## **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.
- 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, take a safe, alternative transportation option or stay at the location of the party.
- 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, find them a safe ride home.
- Buckle up - it's 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.

Extra DWI patrols will continue in Northfield and in Rice County throughout 2019.

The enhanced DWI enforcement campaign is a component of the state's [Toward Zero Deaths](#) (TZD) program. 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.

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