

NHTSA to Motorists: Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over

Rolls out Nationwide Impaired Driving Campaign Through New Year's Day

December 10, 2019 | Kansas City, Mo.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced the 2019 national holiday impaired driving high-visibility enforcement campaigns *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* and *If You Feel Different, You Drive Different – Drive High Get a DUI*. NHTSA was joined by the Missouri and Kansas State Highway Safety Offices, local police departments, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving in Kansas City, Missouri, for the announcement.

[Watch Tuesday's kickoff event in Kansas City.](#)

"Public service educational campaigns backed by tough laws and effective enforcement can save lives," said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao.

Beginning Friday, December 13, tens of thousands of law enforcement officers across the United States will be on heightened alert for impaired drivers. NHTSA's \$8 million media campaign (running December 11, 2019 – January 1, 2020) includes a mix of television, radio, digital, cinema, and social media outlets.

NHTSA and traffic safety stakeholders will also educate the public on the risks of marijuana-impaired driving, a need highlighted by the results of NHTSA's 2013-14 National Roadside Survey which showed an increase in THC-positive drivers. Focus groups with marijuana users show that many people think that they are safer drivers after using marijuana compared with using alcohol, and they do not understand that they can be charged with a DUI for driving while impaired by marijuana.

"Almost everyone knows that driving drunk is dangerous, puts lives at risk, and can get you a DUI – but there isn't the same awareness for marijuana-impaired driving," said James Owens, NHTSA's Acting Administrator. "At NHTSA, we are working hard to raise awareness among the driving public that driving impaired by drugs or alcohol is dangerous and illegal in every state. We want to encourage people to think twice before driving and to follow through by designating a sober driver, calling a cab, or using a ride hailing service."

In 2018, the agency launched *If You Feel Different, You Drive Different* and its high-visibility enforcement component, *Drive High, Get a DUI*, adding drug-impaired driving to the decades-long battle against alcohol-impaired driving.

Some good news: alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities decreased by 3.6% from 2017 to 2018, accounting for 29% of all crash fatalities in 2018 – the lowest percentage since 1982, when NHTSA started reporting alcohol data. Although drunk-driving-related deaths have fallen, they still total more than 10,000 lives per year.

"Driving either drunk or high is a DUI; impairment is impairment," Owens said. "During this nationwide enforcement campaign and year round, if you drive high, you can get a DUI. Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over."

NHTSA encourages everyone to plan ahead, especially when celebrating the holidays, and to never drive drunk or high. Instead, use public transportation, or call a ridesharing service or cab to make sure you get home safely. Driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs is illegal in all 50 states, as well as in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

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