

## **Drive Sober Campaign Kickoff**

NHTSA Acting Administrator Dr. Steven Cliff

**Tuesday, August 17, 2021**

Good morning, I'm Dr. Steven Cliff, Acting Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Thank you so much for joining us as we kick off our impaired driving high-visibility campaign in advance of the Labor Day weekend.

Impaired driving is one of the leading causes of fatal crashes on our nation's roads. It's responsible for more than 10,000 deaths each and every year. And in 2019, an estimated 13 percent of all fatal pedestrian crashes involved an impaired driver.

Every person lost to impaired driving leaves behind countless families, friends and coworkers devastated by their loss. Their families will never be the same, and they leave behind so many loved ones who cherish their memory and mourn their absence.

These crashes are particularly tragic because they are 100-percent preventable. There is no reason and no excuse to ever drive impaired by alcohol or any other drug.

The campaign we're kicking off today, which runs tomorrow through September 6, reminds everyone of the dangers of impaired driving – and the consequences if they choose to drive drunk or high.

Our \$12 million national paid media campaign includes a new advertisement aimed at motorcyclists. When we looked at alcohol-impaired drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2019, we found that the largest percentage – 29 percent – were motorcycle operators. So we want every motorcycle rider to know – Ride Sober or Get Pulled Over.

Our campaign is especially important this year as we address the risky driving trends we saw in 2020. Before the pandemic began, NHTSA had started research on the presence of drugs and alcohol in fatal and near-fatal traffic crashes. That ongoing study allowed us to compare results before and after the crisis began, and we saw an increase in alcohol and drug use in seriously and fatally injured drivers and passengers through September 2020.

We want to make sure these trends don't continue through 2021. NHTSA's partnerships with law enforcement and the justice system are an important part of our work, and equity is at the forefront of these conversations. And because of the important role that traffic enforcement plays in highway safety, it's important that equity be the foundation of those efforts. The public must be able to trust that law enforcement will treat them fairly and honestly, regardless of their background, ethnicity, race, gender, or sexual orientation. It cannot be any other way.

NHTSA has long-standing partnerships with organizations like the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, also known as NOBLE. In fact, NHTSA is providing funding to NOBLE for its recently established Traffic Safety Committee, and equity will be front and center in their work. The committee's co-chair is Chief Jeffrey Glover of the Tempe, Arizona, Police Department – who is here with us today. You'll hear from him shortly.

We have many safety partners with us today, united in our efforts to save lives. I'd like to thank Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Governors Highway Safety Association, the Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center, and the Tempe Police Department for their strong support for our safety mission.

Together, we can stop impaired driving and keep other families from experiencing this heartbreak.

The choice is clear: Drive sober, or face the consequences. And those consequences could cost you your life – or the lives of others on our roads.

We hope people will think twice and make the smart choice to drive sober.