

2016 Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over NEWS RELEASE

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This Labor Day, Remember: Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over

In 2015, our nation lost over 35,000 lives on our roadways, 57 of those were in Vermont. Impairment by alcohol, drugs or both were a contributing factor in almost half of last year's fatal crashes in Vermont.

This Labor Day weekend, families and friends will be celebrating the end of the summer. Sadly, this festive time has also become a dangerous time for America's roads, as many drunk drivers get behind the wheel after celebrating. For this reason, Vermont law enforcement is partnering with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) to stop drunk drivers and help save lives. The high-visibility national enforcement campaign, *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*, runs August 19-September 5, 2016. During this period, local, state and county law enforcement will be increasing patrols in order to prevent and detect drunk driving. Increased state and national messaging about the dangers of driving drunk, coupled with sobriety checkpoints and increased officers on the road, aim to drastically reduce drunk driving on our nation's roads.

According to NHTSA, on average, over 10,000 people died each year (2010 to 2014) in drunk-driving crashes. During the 2014 Labor Day holiday weekend (6 p.m. August 29 – 5:59 a.m. September 2), 40 percent of the fatalities in traffic crashes involved drunk drivers, which was the highest percentage over the five years 2010 to 2014. And nighttime proves to be the most dangerous time to be out on the roads: During the 2014 Labor Day holiday period, 83 percent of drunk-driving crash fatalities occurred between 6 p.m. and 5:59 a.m. – as compared to half of all drunk-driving crash fatalities throughout the rest of that year.

In an effort to help eliminate tragedies, Vermont law enforcement will be deploying high visibility patrols and checkpoints throughout the state. These high visibility patrols and checkpoints will be conducted during the day and night. "There is no good reason to drive if you are impaired to any degree," said Lieutenant John Flannigan of the Vermont State Police Traffic Operations.

Impairment by alcohol is not the only threat on our roads. Vermont law enforcement continues to receive specialized training in ARIDE (Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement), which prepares officers to recognize certain clues of impairment by substances other than alcohol. In addition, nationally certified DREs (Drug Recognition Experts) will be deployed in support of this campaign. The DRE program is a specialty in law enforcement that has means of identifying and prosecuting drug-impaired drivers.

"Please, please: plan ahead before you go out," said Scott Davidson of the Governor's Highway Safety Program. "Designate a sober driver or call a cab. But whatever you do, do not drink and drive."

NHTSA has made it even easier to get home safely when you've been drinking, with the free SaferRide mobile app, available through iTunes and Google Play. The app allows you to call pre-selected contacts or a taxi, and also identifies your location so you can be picked up.

Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.

Media Campaign: <https://youtube.com/user/DriveSoberVT>