

HOLIDAY MINI-PLANNER (FRIENDS) TALKING POINTS & FACT SHEET



Impaired Driving is a Deadly Problem

- Impaired driving is one of America's deadliest problems. Nationally, in 2003, more than 17,000 people died in alcohol-related highway crashes. Hundreds of thousands more were injured.
- Every 30 minutes, nearly 50 times a day, someone in America dies in an alcohol-related crash. This means you, your friends, your family are regularly at risk.
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), about three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.
- Although national alcohol-related highway fatalities during 2003 declined slightly in for the first time in several years (down 3% from 2002), there is still much more work to be done.
- Too many people still don't understand that alcohol, drugs and driving don't mix. Impaired driving is no accident – nor is it a victimless crime.
- Since 1981, every President of the United States has proclaimed December "National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month" to help underscore the public's commitment to preventing impaired driving and promoting the use of designated drivers and sober ride programs.
- Legislators and law enforcement officials are becoming even more vigilant in combating impaired driving. 2004 marks the first year that .08 blood alcohol content (BAC) laws have been enacted in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.
- The month of December and the New Year's Eve holiday are also often highlighted by significant increases in state and local law enforcement efforts to combat impaired driving such as the use of sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols.

This Holiday Season, If You Catch a Buzz, Catch a Ride -- Designate a Sober Driver Before All Holiday Parties

- Americans who drink and drive after holiday parties and festivities make the period between Thanksgiving and New Year's one of the year's most deadly and dangerous seasons due to alcohol-related crashes.
- But much of this could be prevented by reminding all drivers of a few simple precautions:
 - Plan ahead and always designate a sober driver before the holiday party or celebration begins;
 - Don't even think about getting behind the wheel of your vehicle if you've been out drinking;
 - If you are impaired, call a taxi – use mass transit – or get a sober friend or family member to come and get you;
 - Or just stay where you are and sleep it off until you are sober;
 - Remember – *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*. Take the keys and never let a friend leave your sight if you think they are about to drive while impaired; and
 - If you are hosting a party this holiday season, remind your guests to plan ahead and designate their sober driver, always offer alcohol-free beverages during the event, and make sure all of your guests leave with a sober driver.

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Impaired Driving Creates Serious Consequences

- The tragedies and costs from drinking and driving impaired do not just end at the potential death, disfigurement, disability and injury caused by impaired drivers.
- Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is not worth the risk. The consequences are serious and real. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be really significant and not the way you want to spend your holiday season.
- Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver's license, higher insurance rates, and dozens of other unanticipated expenses from attorney fees, other fines and court costs, car towing and repairs, lost time at work, etc.
- Plus there is the added embarrassment, humiliation, and potential loss and consequence after informing family, friends, and employers.

So remember, this holiday season, if you catch a buzz, catch a ride. Designate a sober driver before all holiday season and New Year's festivities.

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