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IDOT, State and Local Police Join Forces for Fourth of July Safety Campaign: “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over”

Emphasis on drunk drivers, seat belt law violators to last through Sunday

SPRINGFIELD – Our nation’s birthday, arguably the most patriotic day of the year, falls in the middle of summer, when Americans are enjoying their freedom and the opportunity to participate in Fourth of July festivities with family and friends. But Independence Day can be one of the deadliest holidays for those who aren’t careful when their celebrations include alcohol. The holiday can quickly move from festive to fatal for those who choose to drive after drinking.

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) announced today that it is partnering with Illinois State Police and more than 270 law enforcement agencies as part of an Independence Day crackdown on drunk driving and seat belt law violators. During the two-week enforcement campaign, which began June 22 and lasts through Sunday, motorists will see an increased effort to improve safety with hundreds of additional patrols, including roadside safety checks and seat belt enforcement zones.

“The extended holiday weekend is the perfect time to celebrate our independence and heritage,” said Jared Thornley, Director of IDOT’s Division of Traffic Safety. “But we remind all Illinois residents that getting home safely is the key to enjoying this great holiday with family and friends. Do not ruin it by putting lives at risk.”

The message is simple – “*Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*” and “*Click It or Ticket.*”

If you’re caught driving drunk, you will be stopped and arrested. If you are unbuckled, you will get a ticket.

“DUI remains the number one cause of 4th of July fatal crashes,” said Illinois State Police Operations Col. Mike Zerbonia. “ISP troopers will be out in force this weekend cracking down on impaired drivers. If you drink and drive, you will get caught and go to jail. Designate a

driver before consuming alcohol.”

During the holiday crackdown, Illinois State Police will join law enforcement agencies across Illinois to conduct more than 100 roadside safety checks and 500 saturation patrols looking to remove drunk drivers from the roads. In addition, more than 550 seat belt enforcement zones will be conducted, more than half of which will be at night, when seat belt usage is typically at its lowest.

According to IDOT statistics, 63 people died in motor vehicle crashes over the last five Independence Day holiday periods, with 27 of those, or 43 percent, involving at least one driver who had been drinking.

The stepped-up effort comes as traffic fatalities in Illinois are slightly above last year’s totals. As of June 30, according to provisional IDOT data, 428 people died in on Illinois roads as compared to 405 during the same timeframe in 2014.

Illinois Motor Vehicle Crashes During Independence Day*

Year	Total Days	Crash Severity			Persons		Alcohol Involvement**		Average killed per day
		Fatal	Injury	Total	Killed	Injured	Killed	Percent of total killed	
2014	3.25	12	NA	NA	18	NA	3	17%	5.54
2013	4.25	17	658	2,660	18	945	6	33%	4.24
2012	1.25	3	187	758	4	280	2	50%	3.20
2011	3.25	12	571	2,106	13	875	9	69%	4.00
2010	3.25	10	538	2,101	10	793	7	70%	3.08

*Crashes that occurred from 6 p.m. on the day before the first full day of the holiday period to 11:59 p.m. on the last day of the holiday period.

**Fatalities resulting from crashes in which a driver had a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of 0.01 or greater.

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