



Pennsylvania
Department of Transportation



Pennsylvania
**Department of Drug and
Alcohol Programs**



Pennsylvania
State Police

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Shapiro Administration Urges Responsible Designated Driving Ahead of Labor Day Weekend

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Departments of Transportation (PennDOT) and Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and safety partners gathered today at Penn State Health Holy Spirit Medical Center to urge motorists to celebrate responsibly ahead of the Labor Day holiday.

“Crashes involving impaired drivers are completely preventable,” said **PennDOT Executive Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet**. “If your celebration this weekend includes alcohol or drugs, plan to get home safely. Choose a designated driver, choose to use a ride-share service or public transportation, but never choose to drive impaired.”

Over the Labor Day holiday weekend last year (Friday, September 1, 2023, through Monday, September 4, 2023) there were 1,189 crashes statewide, resulting in 20 fatalities and 892 injuries. 133 of those crashes were alcohol related, resulting in eight fatalities and 110 injuries; and 41 of those crashes were drug-related, resulting in five fatalities and 48 injuries.

Over this holiday period, PSP and local municipal agencies will conduct impaired driving enforcement details as part of the National Crackdown on Impaired Driving enforcement and education campaign running through September 2. This effort is funded through PennDOT's statewide annual distribution of nearly \$6 million from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for impaired driving enforcement.

The goal of targeted enforcement is to reduce the number of impaired driving-related crashes, injuries, and deaths on roadways throughout the state.

“DUI enforcement saves lives. Everyone is safer when impaired drivers are removed from our roads,” said **PSP Commissioner Colonel Christopher Paris**. “Please enjoy the holiday weekend responsibly.”

During the 2023 Labor Day holiday enforcement period, PSP troopers made 514 DUI arrests and investigated 61 alcohol-related crashes, two of which were fatal.

Impaired driving enforcement goes beyond checking for alcohol impairment. Law enforcement also work to identify motorists impaired by illegal drugs and prescription medication or some combination of these. Pennsylvania has approximately 250 Drug Recognition Experts (DRE) or specially trained officers who look for impaired drivers and assist in DUI investigations when drug-impaired driving is suspected.

“We know that prevention really is our first line of defense when it comes to combatting impaired driving and helping to ensure substance use disorders don’t develop,” said **DDAP Deputy Secretary Kelly Primus**. “As we close out the summer season that traditionally brings with it an uptick in opportunities for alcohol use, please know that the Shapiro Administrations offers 24-7 help for anyone who is struggling with a substance use disorder.”

Individuals seeking substance use treatment or recovery resources can be connected to local substance use disorder (SUD) resources by calling the toll-free PA Get Help Now helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or by using [Treatment Atlas](#), a free, online locator tool to help Pennsylvanians confidentially find SUD treatment that meets their needs.

“Impaired driving leads to preventable injuries and fatalities, and many times turns surgeries into life-or-death struggles,” said **Penn State Health Holy Spirit Medical Center Medical Director of Trauma Services and Chief of Surgery Dr. Dale Dangleben**. “As a trauma surgeon, I see the tragic outcomes firsthand. The consequences extend beyond the obvious injuries to not just the patient but the families and communities.”

Cumberland County Coroner Charley Hall emphasized the importance of sober driving by simply stating, “Impaired driving kills. Don’t become another coroner’s statistic.”

The event featured a demonstration of a drug-detection field sobriety test by PSP Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Program Coordinator Corporal Nathan Zulick. Local municipal police who are participating in the enforcement campaign were also in attendance.

A Penn State Health Life Lion Ambulance was on display, along with the Pennsylvania DUI Association’s Moving DUI Victims’ Memorial. The association has a permanent DUI Victims’ Memorial Garden located in front of their headquarters in Harrisburg, honoring and remembering Pennsylvanians who have been killed in impaired driving crashes. The moving memorial showcases a 25-foot wall printed with all of the names of the DUI victims that have been honored in the garden but is housed in a 30-foot trailer that can travel and be shared with loved ones and advocates around the state.

The safety partners encourage motorists to ensure their safety and the safety of others on our roadways by designating a sober driver or arranging for alternate transportation this Labor Day weekend, and every time they drink. The public can join the conversation on social media by using the hashtags #BeSafePA and #DriveSober.

Learn more about the Shapiro Administration’s efforts in combating the overdose crisis at pa.gov/opioids.

For more information on the Pennsylvania State Police, visit psp.pa.gov.

To learn more about PennDOT’s efforts to prevent impaired driving or other safety initiatives, visit www.penndot.pa.gov/safety.

PennDOT's [media center](#) offers social-media-sized graphics highlighting topics such as seat belts, impaired driving, and distracted driving for organizations, community groups, or others who share safety information with their stakeholders.

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