



Pennsylvania  
Department of Transportation



Pennsylvania  
State Police

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## **Shapiro Administration Promotes Holiday Travel Safety**

*With inclement weather forecast during holiday, drivers urged to check 511PA.com and allow extra travel time*

*Operation Safe Holiday runs through New Year's holiday with crackdown on impaired drivers and unbuckled occupants*

**Harrisburg, PA** – Today, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PA Turnpike) came together to remind drivers to wear their seat belts, drive sober, and eliminate distractions behind the wheel.

Operation Safe Holiday kicked off on November 11 with the “Click It or Ticket” (CIOT) Thanksgiving Enforcement Mobilization running through December 1.

“These enforcement efforts are not about tickets, they are about saving lives,” said **PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll**. “PennDOT data shows seat belts save lives. Wearing your seat belt is your best defense against injury or death in the event of a crash. No matter how far you travel this year, buckle up!”

Last year, it is estimated that 92% of unbelted occupants, or 282 people, who were killed in crashes while traveling in passenger vehicles, including cars, small trucks, vans, and SUVs, could have survived if they had been buckled up.

Pennsylvania law requires any occupant younger than 18 to buckle up when riding in a vehicle, as well as drivers and front-seat passengers. Children under the age of two must be secured in a rear-facing car seat, and children under the age of four must be restrained in an approved child safety seat. Children must ride in a booster seat until their eighth birthday.

As part of the CIOT enforcement mobilization, PSP will hold [child safety seat fitting clinics](#) at several locations across the state.

Throughout Operation Safe Holiday, law enforcement will also conduct sobriety checkpoints, roving patrols, and regular traffic safety patrols beginning Wednesday, November 20, and running through the New Year's holiday to crack down on drivers impaired by drugs or alcohol.

"The Pennsylvania State Police is dedicated to ensuring the safety of everyone who travels the highways and secondary roads of our Commonwealth. With this comes zero tolerance for impaired drivers," said **PSP Commissioner Colonel Christopher Paris**. "Wear your seat belts, drive sober, and eliminate distractions behind the wheel."

According to PennDOT data, during the 2023 holiday travel period beginning the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and running through January 2, 2024, there were 1,061 alcohol-related crashes, resulting in 22 fatalities and 618 suspected serious injuries. During the same timeframe, there were 360 drug-related crashes, resulting in 26 fatalities and 267 suspected serious injuries.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission is once again expecting big numbers over the Thanksgiving holiday. Approximately 3.4 million motorists are expected to be traveling the PA Turnpike during the six-day holiday period starting today and running through Sunday, December 1 with Tuesday and Wednesday looking to be the heaviest travel days. Motorists experiencing any issues while traveling the PA Turnpike, such as debris on the roadway, medical emergencies, or a disabled vehicle, can always dial \*11 on their mobile phones to reach a PA Turnpike traffic operator for support. The PA Turnpike traffic operations center is staffed 24-hours a day, seven days a week to assist all customers.

"Safety is essential to the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and motorists play a critical role in ensuring safer roads," said **PA Turnpike COO Craig Shuey**. "Distractions can increase during the holiday season, which means we need drivers more than ever to do what they can to remove distractions, stay alert and focus on the road. Responsible and mindful driving will help motorists get to their holiday destinations safely."

Ahead of anticipated winter weather during the holiday, the agencies are encouraging motorists to plan ahead and exercise caution when traveling. While PennDOT recommends not traveling during winter storms, motorists can check conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles, including color-coded winter conditions on 2,900 miles, by visiting [www.511PA.com](http://www.511PA.com). 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information and access to more than 1,000 traffic cameras. 511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by [following regional X alerts](#).

Drivers should prepare or restock their [emergency kits](#) with items such as non-perishable food, water, first-aid supplies, warm clothes, a blanket, cell phone charger

and a small snow shovel. Motorists should tailor their kits to any specific needs that they or their families have such as baby supplies, extra medication, and pet supplies.

During the event, PennDOT and the PA Turnpike reminded motorists about a new tool, [announced last month](#), that will help keep travelers safe this winter. Vehicles from both agencies were on site equipped with new, additional green lights which are incorporated with existing flashing or revolving yellow (amber) lights. This additional strategy aims to increase safety by making construction and maintenance operations more visible. PennDOT, the PA Turnpike, municipalities, and contractors working on their behalf may now install flashing or revolving green lights in addition to yellow (amber) lights after Governor Josh Shapiro signed [Act 78 of 2024](#) on July 17. The lights have been used in other states and are [proven to improve vehicles' visibility](#).

For more information on safe winter travel, an emergency kit checklist and information on PennDOT's winter operations including a video, visit [www.PennDOT.pa.gov/winter](http://www.PennDOT.pa.gov/winter). Additional winter driving and other highway safety information is available at [www.PennDOT.pa.gov/safety](http://www.PennDOT.pa.gov/safety).

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The holiday seat belt and impaired driving enforcement are funded through PennDOT's statewide annual distribution from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. For more information on PennDOT's highway safety efforts visit, [www.PennDOT.pa.gov/safety](http://www.PennDOT.pa.gov/safety).

To learn more about the PA Turnpike safety, visit [www.PATurnpike.com/rampup/safety-keys](http://www.PATurnpike.com/rampup/safety-keys).

For more information on the Pennsylvania State Police, visit [psp.pa.gov](http://psp.pa.gov).

**Editor's Note:** Photos and video from the event will be available at [PACast.com](http://PACast.com).

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