



Pennsylvania
Department of Transportation



Pennsylvania
State Police



Pennsylvania
Insurance Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 24, 2025

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**Shapiro Administration Reminds Drivers to Put the Phone Down,
Buckle Up, and Drive Sober this Holiday Travel Season**

Operation Safe Holiday runs through January 1 with crackdown on impaired drivers and unbuckled occupants

Over 1,100 crashes, 31 fatalities from drug and alcohol related crashes last holiday travel season

Harrisburg, PA – Today, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PA Turnpike), Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and Pennsylvania Insurance Department (PID) 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 10 with the “Click It or Ticket” (CIOT) Thanksgiving Enforcement Mobilization running through November 30. The Holiday Season Impaired Driving Campaign began November 19 and runs through January 1.

“These enforcement efforts are not about tickets, they are about saving lives,” said **PennDOT Executive Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet**. “Before hitting the road this holiday season, make a plan to get home safely! Designate a sober driver or plan to take a ride share. Put your phone down and always buckle up. Wearing your seat belt is your best defense against injury or death in the event of a crash.”

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.

Throughout Operation Safe Holiday, law enforcement will conduct sobriety checkpoints, roving patrols, and regular traffic safety patrols to crack down on drivers impaired by drugs or alcohol.

“The Pennsylvania State Police is committed to ensuring the safety of everyone traveling on the highways and secondary roads of our Commonwealth,” said **PSP Commissioner Colonel Christopher Paris**. “We have zero tolerance for impaired driving. Always wear your seat belt, drive sober, and eliminate distractions behind the wheel.”

According to [PennDOT data](#), during the 2024 holiday travel period beginning the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and running through January 2, 2025, there were 857 alcohol-related crashes, resulting in 18 fatalities and 542 suspected serious injuries. During the same time, there were 307 drug-related crashes, resulting in 13 fatalities and 267 suspected serious injuries.

Additionally, Pennsylvania’s hands-free law, known as [Paul Miller’s Law](#), is now in effect. This law prohibits the use of hand-held devices while driving, even while stopped temporarily due to traffic, a red light, or other momentary delay. Pennsylvania already enforces a [texting-while-driving ban](#) that prohibits drivers from using mobile devices to send, read, or write text-based communications while their vehicle is in motion. Under Paul Miller’s Law, drivers can still use their phones to alert emergency responders and, if they are using hands-free technology, to make phone calls, use a GPS, and listen to music.

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, November 30 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 the driving force of our operations, which is why we are proud to have approximately 600 maintenance colleagues working across the system to support customers,” said **PA Turnpike CEO Mark Compton**. “The holidays are an exciting time – but getting to your family and friends safely is what matters most. That begins with responsible driving. Avoid distractions, stay vigilant and prepare for traffic.”

PID reminds drivers that consistent safe driving practices and seat belt use saves lives and helps keep consumers’ auto insurance rates stable. Insurers consider driving behavior and safety records when setting premiums, and drivers who take simple steps like buckling up, avoiding distractions, and following traffic laws are less likely to face the higher costs associated with crashes and violations.

“Choosing to wear a seat belt every trip, every time, paired with sober and focused driving, is one of the most effective ways Pennsylvanians can protect themselves, their families, and other people while also keeping their long-term insurance costs down,” said **Deputy Insurance Commissioner for Market Regulation Dave Buono**. “It’s also important to know the right steps to take if a crash does happen to ensure your claim is handled fairly and without delay.”

For drivers involved in a crash, the agencies recommend following this advice:

- Move your vehicle as far as possible from the travel lanes if it's able to be driven.
- Call 911 right away if your vehicle or another involved vehicle cannot be driven due to damage, or if one of the involved parties is injured.
- Remain inside the vehicle with your seat belt on and hazard lights activated if your vehicle is disabled in the lane of travel.
- If it's not safe to remain inside your vehicle, assess the situation and get yourself and passengers to a place of safety such as behind a barrier or guiderail. Do so as quickly as possible and DO NOT remain in the travel lanes or near your vehicle.
- Exchange information with the other driver(s). Be sure to obtain the name, insurance company name, and phone number of each of the other drivers. If you cannot obtain this information, write down the license plate number of each of the other drivers.
- Other important information is as follows:
 - The year, make, and model of each of the other cars.
 - If there are witnesses, their names and contact information.
 - If an officer comes to the scene, their name, badge number, police report number, and contact information.
- After the crash, write down the date, time, and location. If possible, take photos. Write down what happened.

Taking these steps will assist you when reporting the claim to your insurance company. For more info on how to submit a claim, visit PID's [website](#). Pennsylvanians who have questions about their auto insurance or claim, or would like to submit a complaint to PID, can reach out to PID online at pa.gov/consumer or by calling 1-866-PA-COMPLAINT (1-866-722-6675).

The holiday seat belt and impaired driving enforcement campaigns 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.

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. 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information and access to more than 1,200 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](#).

Subscribe to PennDOT news and traffic alerts at pa.gov/DOTnews. Find PennDOT news on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

Editor's Note: Photos and video from the event will be available at PACast.com.

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