

News for Immediate Release

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PennDOT, Police to Crack Down on Impaired Driving through Labor Day

Harrisburg – PennDOT, state police and municipal police are partnering to crack down on impaired driving through Labor Day on Sept. 2 as part of a national enforcement initiative.

As part of the "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" effort, Pennsylvania's enforcement will focus not only on drivers impaired by alcohol, but also the increasing number of drug-impaired motorists.

"As the Labor Day holiday approaches we are focusing on the issue of impaired driving, and unfortunately drug-related crashes are increasing in number," PennDOT Secretary Barry J. Schoch said. "Crashes and deaths involving impaired drivers are completely preventable. We urge motorists to drive sober, unimpaired by drugs or alcohol."

PennDOT statistics for 2011 show there were 3,079 drug-related crashes statewide, with 116 fatalities in those crashes. In 2012, those numbers increased to 3,306 drug-related crashes statewide with 126 fatalities.

The same data also shows that alcohol-related crashes increased from 11,778 in 2011 to 11,956 in 2012. Fatalities in those crashes decreased from 428 in 2011 to 404 in 2012.

During last year's Labor Day weekend, there were 125 alcohol-related crashes and eight fatalities as well as 30 drug-related crashes.

Statewide police statistics show that there were 56,317 driving under the influence (DUI) arrests in 2012, a decrease from 56,774 in 2011. DUI-drug arrests continue to account for a larger percentage of these arrests, with 17,064 such arrests in 2012, an increase from 15,445 in 2011.

The legal blood-alcohol content in Pennsylvania is 0.08 for motorists over the age of 21. Driving under the influence penalties can include jail time, license suspension and fines of between \$500 and \$5,000.

Pennsylvania's DUI Task Forces, the Pennsylvania State Police and local law enforcement statewide will conduct checkpoints and roving patrols as part of the crackdown.

Funding comes from part of PennDOT's statewide distribution of \$4.2 million in federal funds from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Visit <u>www.JustDrivePA.com</u> for more information on impaired driving and PennDOT's other important traffic-safety initiatives.

Media contact: Ashley Schoch 717-783-8800

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