

### 'Operation Safe Holiday' Focuses on Seat Belt Use, Impaired Driving

HARRISBURG, Pa., Nov. 22, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- PennDOT, the Pennsylvania State Police and local police statewide are teaming for "Operation Safe Holiday," an enforcement initiative focusing on seat-belt use and impaired-driving that aims to reduce crashes and traffic fatalities this holiday season.

The operation begins with statewide Click It or Ticket seat-belt enforcement that runs from Nov. 22-Dec. 1

. Law enforcement agencies will also conduct sobriety checkpoints, roving patrols and regular traffic safety patrols on

Thanksgiving

Eve,

Nov. 27

, and from

Dec. 1

through the

New Year's

holiday to crack down on drivers impaired by drugs or alcohol.

"Unfortunately, holiday crash totals have continued to trend upward this year," PennDOT Secretary Barry J. Schoch said. "Though there was a decrease in December data totals, Thanksgiving continues to be one of the most dangerous weekends for motorists. We continue to urge drivers to buckle up and avoid driving impaired on Pennsylvania's roadways."

According to PennDOT data, the holiday season continues to be the leading time period for traffic crashes. The Thanksgiving holiday period, including the weekends before and after the holiday as well as the day itself, experienced the highest number of crashes and fatalities of any major holiday season last year. A total of 4,328 crashes and 53 fatalities occurred statewide

during the Thanksgiving period, while the Christmas and New Year's travel periods saw a combined 1,640 crashes and 19 fatalities.

Additionally, during the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's holidays, 861 of the statewide crashes involved a driver impaired by drugs or alcohol, with 31 fatalities in those crashes. In that same time period there were 758 crashes with unbuckled occupants, with 36 fatalities in those crashes.

PennDOT urges travelers to never drive impaired and always buckle up. Drivers should also avoid distractions, rotate drivers if possible and take frequent breaks.

Motorists should allow extra time for travel and expect to encounter traffic delays. As weather and road conditions can worsen quickly at this time of year, motorists should always check the forecast for their entire route and make sure their vehicle is equipped with a winter emergency kit and tires with good traction.

Weather and travel information for more than 2,900 miles of state roads is available by calling 511 or visiting [www.511pa.com](http://www.511pa.com) before leaving home.

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