



pennsylvania
STATE POLICE



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Wolf Administration Reminds Drivers to Buckle Up, Drive Sober During Holiday Travel Period

Harrisburg, PA – As Pennsylvanians look ahead to Thanksgiving and the beginning of the busy holiday travel season, representatives from safety partners Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission gathered at Turnpike Commission headquarters to stress the importance of seat belts and sober driving during the holidays.

November 19 marks the start of the nationwide Click It or Ticket “Operation Safe Holiday” enforcement effort, which sees law enforcement nationwide adopt a zero-tolerance approach toward traffic law violations, including driving under the influence.

In addition to enforcement efforts, Operation Safe Holiday includes no-cost child passenger safety seat [fitting clinics](#) through December 2. Troopers and other state police members certified as child passenger safety technicians will be available to assist with car seat installation and to answer any questions parents have.

“Child safety seats are required by law in Pennsylvania, but they are only effective when installed and used correctly,” said PSP Major Edward Hoke, acting deputy commissioner of staff. “Every seat is different, which is why trained child passenger safety technicians are available to personally assist parents and caregivers with their own seats and vehicles.”

Pennsylvania law mandates children under the age of four be properly restrained in an approved child safety seat. Children under two must be secured in a rear-facing car seat until the child outgrows the maximum weight and height limits designated by the manufacturer. Booster seats are required for children four to eight, to keep them protected in the event of a crash.

According to PennDOT data, during the Thanksgiving holiday travel period in 2017, including the weekend before and after the holiday as well as the day itself, there were 2,903 crashes and 21 fatalities in those crashes statewide. The Christmas and New Year’s travel periods, including the weekend before Christmas, New Year’s and the weekend after, saw 4,253 crashes and 29 fatalities.

“The most effective ways to prevent collisions on the roadways and to arrive at your holiday destinations safely is to slow down, designate a sober driver, and never drive distracted,” said PennDOT District Executive Mike Keiser, P.E. “When crashes do happen, PennDOT and first responders will work quickly to help the involved parties and keep traffic moving.”

Travelers can check up-to-the-minute traffic information statewide at www.511PA.com or the PA511 smartphone app. Additionally, conditions on the current conditions on the Pennsylvania Turnpike can be viewed at www.paturnpike.com.

The PA Turnpike Commission estimates that 3.7 million cars and trucks will travel the toll highway during the six-day Thanksgiving period. To accommodate the increase in traffic volumes, the Turnpike will suspend all scheduled maintenance and construction activities from Tuesday through Sunday.

“With the heavy traffic during our busiest travel holiday, it’s critical to move over for stopped emergency response and recovery vehicles,” said PA Turnpike CEO Mark Compton. “We must give responders the space they need to do their jobs — not to mention the respect they have earned for the work they do. Giving them a full lane to do their jobs is one way we can offer a gesture of thanks to these heroes who will sacrifice holiday family time to protect and assist travelers.”

The holiday seat belt and DUI enforcement are funded by part of PennDOT’s statewide distribution of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration enforcement monies this federal fiscal year. For more information on PennDOT’s highway safety efforts visit, www.penndot.gov/safety.

The public can join the discussion using the hashtag #PASafeHoliday.

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