



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Designate a Sober Driver this St. Patrick's Day
Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 15, 2022) – This St. Patrick's Day, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's (KYTC) Office of Highway Safety is joining the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in reminding motorists that Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving.

"As we make strides to experience a sense of normalcy in light of the pandemic, I want to encourage Kentuckians to celebrate St. Patrick's Day safely," said Gov. Andy Beshear. "If you plan to drink alcohol, plan for a safe ride home by designating a sober driver."

Over the past three years, KYTC reports 38 crashes statewide related to a drunken driver on St. Patrick's Day, resulting in 14 injuries and one death.

"Impairment begins with one drink," said KYTC Secretary Jim Gray. "Alcohol not only impairs your driving skills – it hinders your judgment – so don't wait until you've been drinking to find a sober driver."

According to NHTSA, on average, one person is killed every 52 minutes in a drunken-driving crash in the United States. Last year, more than 15 percent of deaths on Kentucky roadways were due to a drunken driver.

"These are not just numbers," said Secretary Gray. "These are people – mothers, daughters, sons, fathers – who never made it home to their loved ones due to someone's choice to drink and drive. Any number above zero is unacceptable."

To prevent tragedies from occurring, NHTSA and the KYTC recommend the following:

- Before the festivities begin, plan a way to get home at the end of the night safely;
- If you're impaired, use a ride-booking company, taxi, call a sober friend or family member or use public transportation;
- If you see an impaired driver, safely pull over and contact law enforcement. You may dial the KSP toll-free line directly at 1-800-222-5555 or call 911;
- If you know people who are about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to their destination safely; and

- Wear a seat belt! It is not only the law, it is the best defense against an impaired driver. Buckling up helps prevent injury and death if involved in a crash.

“Drunken driving crashes are 100 percent preventable,” said Secretary Gray. “With all the sober ride options available, there is never an excuse for driving after drinking. Don’t be the reason someone — including yourself — doesn’t get home safely.”

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