



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
TRANSPORTATION CABINET
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 13, 2023) – Although Irish in its roots, St. Patrick's Day is most widely celebrated in the United States. While celebrations are expected, particularly this year since the holiday falls on a Friday, motorists are reminded never to drive buzzed and to make a plan to get home safely.

"Buzzed driving affects more than you," said Gov. Andy Beshear. "One bad decision can literally wreck your life, and the lives of innocent people on the road. If you plan to drink alcohol, please plan for a safe ride home by designating a sober driver."

To help keep roadways safe, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's (KYTC) Office of Highway Safety is joining the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in spreading the message that Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving.

Over the past three years, KYTC reports 30 crashes statewide related to a drunken drive on St. Patrick's Day, resulting in 24 injuries and six fatalities.

"If you have to do something to make yourself ok to drive, you're not okay to drive," said KYTC Secretary Jim Gray. "Impairment begins with one drink. Alcohol impairs your driving skills and 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 45 minutes in a drunken-driving crash in the United States. Last year, approximately 15 percent of deaths on Kentucky roadways were due to a drunken driver.

"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."

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

1. Before festivities begin, plan a way to get home at the end of the night safely;
2. If impaired, use a ride-booking company or taxi, call a sober friend or family member or use public transportation;
3. 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;

4. 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; and
5. 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.

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