

NEWS RELEASE

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Don't let drunken driving turn Super Bowl fun into tragedy

BATON ROUGE – With the New Orleans Saints playing in the Super Bowl for the first time ever, Louisianians from all corners of the state will be gathering at private parties, restaurants and bars where alcohol may be served to cheer on their team during the big game. The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission is advising Saints fans to keep their celebrations safe by not driving while intoxicated.

The Super Bowl, set for Sunday, Feb. 7, also falls in the midst of Mardi Gras season, another event that is often celebrated with alcohol consumption. Game day celebrations all too often lead to tragedy on roadways throughout the nation. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 49 percent of all fatal crashes that occurred on Super Bowl Sunday in 2008 involved impaired drivers. That compared to a 32 percent alcohol-related fatal crash rate nationwide for the remainder of that year, the most recent for which comparative statistics are available.

Lt. Col. John LeBlanc, executive director of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, is urging motorists and party hosts to be responsible as they cheer on their favorite team on Super Bowl Sunday.

“Super Bowl Sunday is a big partying event, not only in Louisiana but across the country,” LeBlanc said. “The national statistics regarding fatal crashes on Super Bowl Sunday make it clear that too many people are getting inebriated at these events, then driving home or to another location while still impaired. We are urging all party goers and hosts to act responsibly.”

Law enforcement officers across Louisiana will be out in force on Super Bowl Sunday working to save lives by getting drunk drivers off the roads. The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission provides grants to local law enforcement agencies and Louisiana State Police to increase enforcement activities during certain periods. The grants help law enforcement agencies conduct overtime patrols and checkpoints dedicated to enforcing the state's DWI, safety belt and other laws.

For people who plan on attending or hosting a Super Bowl party, the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration offer the following tips:

For Super Bowl party hosts and guests:

- Make sure designated drivers are identified before kick-off, or help arrange ride-sharing with other drivers.
- Stop serving or consuming alcohol at the end of the third quarter of the game, and begin serving or consuming coffee and dessert.
- Make sure that plenty of food is available and consumed.
- Include soft drinks, juice and water.

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