



LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE

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La. law enforcement has holiday plans for impaired drivers

The bright, blinking lights that impaired drivers see in their rearview mirrors won't be coming from Rudolph's shiny nose: Louisiana law enforcement officers are patrolling the state to take drunk drivers off the roads and into jail this holiday season.

The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission is participating in "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over," a national campaign to make the roads safer for holiday travelers. The special law enforcement wave runs through January 1, 2022.

LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman said the campaign is surely needed this year.

"We had an unusually high number of alcohol-involved injuries and fatalities during the holidays last year," Freeman said. "Since Christmas falls on a Saturday this year, and since New Year's Eve is on a Friday, we see high potential for impaired drivers on the road."

In 2020, 181 people were injured or killed in alcohol-involved crashes, the most since 2015, according to the Center for Analytics and Research in Transportation Studies at LSU. The last time Christmas and New Year's Eve fell on Saturday and Friday, respectively, was in 2010, when 251 people were injured or killed in alcohol-involved crashes.

During the Christmas holiday last year, 86 people were injured and eight died in crashes that involved a driver who had been consuming alcohol. Another 87 people were injured, and four died in alcohol-involved crashes around the 2020 New Year's Eve holiday.

During the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign, LHSC makes federal highway safety funds available to law enforcement agencies across the state. The funds are used to help those agencies put more officers on the street to identify impaired drivers during the campaign.

"Our goal is not to put people in jail. Our goal is to make the roads safe for the vast majority of Louisiana drivers who don't drink and drive or take drugs and drive," Freeman said. "We are working to keep those drivers and their passengers safe by taking the impaired drivers off the road."

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