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LHSC urges safe driving practices this Halloween

Baton Rouge — In October, 2022, Louisiana lost 94 people in preventable roadway crashes. It was the deadliest month on record since 2008. This year, history does not need to repeat itself.

“Of course, we want everyone to enjoy the Halloween season with their families and friends,” LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman said, “but we want to remind drivers to avoid the ‘fatal four.’ That means wear your seat belt, put your phone away, drive the speed limit, and do not get behind the wheel if you’re feeling drunk or buzzed.”

Unfortunately, 2022 wasn’t just a fluke. In Louisiana, over the past decade, October has consistently been one of the deadliest months of the year on the roadways. If you’re driving this Halloween, please watch out for pedestrians and trick-or-treaters.

Death, as well as serious injury, are all too-common outcomes at a time that should be fun-filled. According to the Center for Analytics & Research in Transportation Safety at LSU, a suspected 544 Louisianans suffered a severe injury from a crash during the Halloween weekend in 2022.

“We know most people are dressed up and ready to have a good time for Halloween, but we urge everyone to take their driving seriously,” Freeman said. “We want everyone to be able to enjoy many more great Halloween seasons together.”

LHSC suggests that those planning to celebrate Halloween with alcoholic beverages to have a designated driver or plan to use a taxi or rideshare such as Lyft and Uber. And as a reminder, alcohol isn’t the only thing that can impair driving, which can happen with illegal drugs and even prescription medication.

“If everyone does their part, then the scariest thing we’ll have to endure this year will be a corn maze or the inside of a haunted house,” Freeman said. “A good rule of thumb is that if you feel different, then you drive different. Everyone has a right to use the roads, so please focus when you’re out there. You have way too much to lose.”

NHTSA Safety Tips for Drivers

- Be alert for trick-or-treaters on Halloween. Slow down and continue to scan the road in areas where they are likely to be or where sight distances are limited.
- On Halloween, there will likely be more pedestrians on the roads and in places where they are not expected. Slower speeds save lives.

- Stay alert for pedestrians who may come out from between parked cars or behind shrubbery. Stop, and wait for them to pass.
- Don't look at your phone when you're driving. Your attention needs to always be on the road.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact law enforcement.

Tips for Pedestrians

- Walk on a sidewalk if one is available and use crosswalks.
- Before the Halloween festivities begin, create a "buddy system" to get each other home safely and prevent walking alone.

Tips for Party Hosts

- Be a responsible party host and take action to make sure guests get home safely.
- Serve plenty of food and provide non-alcoholic beverage options.
- Collect car keys from guests who are drinking.
- Prepare to call taxis, rideshares, provide sleeping accommodations, or — if you're sober — drive guests home yourself.

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