

Dept. of Transportation: Make a plan to drive sober this holiday season

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The Wisconsin State Patrol asks drivers to prioritize safety this season and plan for a sober ride home from holiday celebrations. Officers will step up enforcement to stop impaired driving during the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign. The national effort begins December 15 and runs through New Year's Day.

While Wisconsin law enforcement agencies work together throughout the year to identify and prevent impaired driving, this high-visibility presence comes during the holiday season when impaired driving is typically a greater concern.

During the last holiday season (Dec. 15, 2022 – Jan. 1, 2023), there were 470 crashes involving impaired drivers in Wisconsin. Those incidents killed five people and injured 178 others.

“Alcohol and other drugs have grave consequences on our roads. We want to help drivers recognize the risks of impaired driving and prevent the dangerous circumstances that result from the decision to get behind the wheel while impaired,” Superintendent Tim Carnahan said.

The Wisconsin State Patrol works to assist local law enforcement agencies with obtaining specialty training to detect impairment and get dangerous drivers off the road. Almost 7,000 officers in Wisconsin are trained in Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) and the state has among the most Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) in the nation, with nearly 400 officers who have completed DRE training.

Impaired driving has many consequences for a driver in addition to the potential for a crash. OWI convictions can cost around \$10,000, including fines, court costs, lost

time at work, higher insurances rates, and vehicle services. A driver can also lose their license and vehicle because of an OWI conviction.

Plan for a safe ride this holiday season

Many will be celebrating the holidays in the coming weeks, but the plan for those festive events must also come with a plan for a safe ride home for yourself or your guests.

The State Patrol encourages drivers to put safety first during the holidays:

- Identify a sober designated driver. If you're feeling the effects of alcohol or another substance, you likely are over the 0.08 BAC limit and should not drive.
- Take the bus, call a taxi, or use a rideshare service instead of getting behind the wheel. Use the [Safe Ride](#) program to find a ride home.
- If you have a friend who is about to drink and drive, step in. Take the keys away and help them get home safely.
- If you suspect a driver is impaired, safely gather as much info as you can about the vehicle, driver, and location. Then call 911.