NEWS RELEASE
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"Know Your Limit": Sacramento Police, AAA and State Traffic Safety Leaders Educate on Dangers of Drinking and Driving During Holiday Season

What you need to know: The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), California Highway Patrol (CHP), California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), American Automobile Association (AAA), and Sacramento Police Department visited bars and restaurants in Sacramento to educate the public on how much, or how little, alcohol it takes to reach the legal limit of 0.08 percent.

SACRAMENTO – In an effort to promote responsible and safe celebrations over the holidays, the OTS, Caltrans, ABC, CHP, DMV, AAA and Sacramento Police Department participated in a "Know Your Limit" education event at local bars and restaurants.

Officers asked volunteers to test their blood alcohol content (BAC) levels with a Preliminary Alcohol Screening Device (PAS), also known as a breathalyzer. People who had consumed alcohol could voluntarily use the PAS device and guess their BAC. People were then provided information on alcohol intake and average BAC levels, as well as how varying levels of impairment impacts driving ability. Rideshare credits were also provided courtesy of AAA as incentives to customers to get home safely, and for any designated sober drivers.

The Sacramento Police Department is one of 53 law enforcement agencies throughout the state that receives funding from the OTS to hold "Know Your Limit" program events.

"While the 'Know Your Limit' event is intended to be fun and interactive, it underscores a serious message: impaired driving is dangerous and deadly," Sacramento Police Department Sgt. Anna Mahoney said. "Our goal is to reduce dangerous driving behaviors. When it comes to alcohol, prevention is key to saving lives and keeping everyone on the road safe."

"With our partners, the OTS is focused on preventing impaired driving and saving lives," OTS Director Stephanie Dougherty said. "We encourage drivers to look out for other travelers and make the commitment to drive safely every time you get behind the wheel. If you plan to have a drink this holiday season and beyond, plan for a sober ride home - arrange a ride with a sober driver, use public transit, or call a rideshare."

"Christmas and year-end holidays are a popular time to go out drinking, but no one wants to start the season with a preventable tragedy," ABC Director Paul Tupy said. "Impaired driving costs

far too many lives in California, and ABC is committed to making this holiday season as safe as possible."

"The CHP works year-round to keep California's roads safe for everyone, and our officers are ready to take action when they see unsafe driving, especially impaired driving," CHP Commissioner Sean Duryee said. "DUI crashes are preventable tragedies with life-altering consequences. Let's all do our part to make it home for the holidays by making smart choices and driving sober."

"As we celebrate the holiday season with our close friends and loved ones, I urge drivers to remember that Caltrans crews and other dedicated highway workers also have families and special people in their lives who need them to return home after their work shifts," Caltrans Director Dina El-Tawansy said. "Responsible decisions happen before drivers start their cars, and impaired driving is a preventable choice. Please travel responsibly and think of others when you take to the highways."

"The DMV takes driver safety seriously and is committed to keeping California roads safe," DMV Director Steve Gordon said. "Driving is a privilege that should not be taken lightly. We urge drivers to treat impaired driving as a careless and dangerous act that can not only result in your driving privileges being taken away, but also lead to deadly, tragic consequences."

"AAA is dedicated to the safety of everyone on our roadways, and impaired driving is a preventable crisis," said Doug Johnson, spokesperson for AAA Northern California. "Drunk driving deaths have increased across the country by 22% since 2019. This holiday season, AAA asks you to help save lives by planning a sober ride home before you start celebrating."

Why it Matters

In 2023, 1,109 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes, an average of three people every day. Deadly crashes involving alcohol accounted for 27% of all fatal crashes on California roads. According to the DMV, the average BAC level among convicted DUI offenders in 2020 was .17%, more than double the legal limit.

What the Law Says

It is illegal for anyone 21 or older to drive with a BAC of .08% or higher. It is illegal for anyone under 21 or on DUI probation to drive with a BAC of .01% or higher. Additionally, it is illegal for anyone to drive with a BAC of .04% or higher if you drive a vehicle that requires a commercial driver's license or as a passenger for hire.

Even if your BAC is below legal limits, any level of alcohol can affect your driving ability, such as reduced coordination, slower reaction times and vision problems. Drivers who are suspected to be impaired may still be arrested without a BAC measurement or one below .08%.

The legal and monetary consequences for a DUI are severe; a first-time DUI can cost more than $10,000 after court costs, fines upon conviction, license reinstatement, even possible jail time, as well as points on your driving record that could lead to penalties against your driving privilege.

Zero Tolerance: Maximum Enforcement Periods Over the Holidays

As the CHP prepares for its Holiday Enforcement Periods over Christmas and New Year's, the CHP is urging motorists to make safety their top priority. CHP officers will be out in full force to protect everyone who uses California's roadways, with a particular focus on stopping impaired drivers before they cause harm. Over this year's four and ¼ day Thanksgiving Holiday Enforcement Period alone, CHP officers made 1,281 DUI arrests and issued more than 21,000 speeding citations.

The CHP enforcement efforts over the holidays come after the OTS awarded nearly $22.3 million to the CHP to support 20 projects statewide. This includes $6 million for impaired driving efforts that fund DUI checkpoints, saturation patrols, and public education campaigns. Another project, Regulate Impaired Driving Effort (RIDE), focuses on reducing fatal and serious injury crashes on roads patrolled by the South Sacramento Area Office. These roads include Interstate 5, U.S. Highway 50, and State Routes 12 and 99 where the primary crash factor is driving under the influence of alcohol.

Responsible Beverage Service, Licensee Education on Alcohol and Drug (LEAD) Trainings

Over the Christmas and New Year's holidays, the ABC will visit licensees to make sure they are checking identifications to prevent underage drinking and not overserving obviously intoxicated customers. Any ABC licensee who has a license to sell and service alcoholic drinks for consumption on their property is required to have servers and managers take Responsible Beverage Service training and pass the ABC Alcohol Server Certification exam.

Additional OTS-funded programs through ABC include LEAD training, which is a free education program for retail licensees on selling alcoholic beverages safely, responsibly and legally, as well as fake identification enforcement, compliance checks for alcohol delivery services, and enforcement operations targeting adults of legal drinking age who purchase alcohol for youth (Shoulder Tap) or merchants who sell alcohol to youth (Minor Decoy). The Shoulder Tap and Minor Decoy programs support 27 local law enforcement agencies throughout the state to combat underage drinking and other alcohol-related harm to youth.

Don't Be the 'I' in DUI

Earlier this month, the OTS and Caltrans launched the "Don't Be the 'I' in DUI" public awareness campaign, which focuses on how nobody wants to be the one who must explain why they drove impaired, got a DUI, and now live with the consequences. The campaign runs through the New Year's holiday.

The OTS, CHP, Caltrans, ABC, DMV, AAA and Sacramento Police Department remind the public that driving under the influence is not just from alcohol. Prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, cannabis products and other drugs may also cause impairment, especially in combination with alcohol. Have a plan and designate a sober driver or use ride-share services. If you see or suspect an impaired driver, call 9-1-1.

Become a sober driver ambassador today and be the solution to impaired driving at chpddp.com. To learn about other helpful ways to stay safe on to go, visit www.GoSafelyCA.org.

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