

Impaired driving a problem of holiday travel

**(MSC News)--The day of frenzied shopping that follows Thanksgiving is commonly referred to as Black Friday. But, in recent years, some have started referring to the night *before* Thanksgiving as ‘Blackout Wednesday’ or ‘Drinksgiving’ because of the heavy alcohol consumption or binge drinking done by college students and others, home for the holiday and reuniting with friends and family at bars, restaurants or homes.**

**“While ‘Blackout Wednesday’ or ‘Drinksgiving’ may be clever ‘buzz’ words, there’s nothing clever about being buzzed or drunk and getting behind the wheel,” said Shawn Steward, spokesman for AAA Kansas. “Drivers also need to remember that prescription, over-the-counter medications and illegal drugs can impair the ability to drive safely, as well. Also, combining any of these drugs with alcohol can increase the impairment factor more.”**

**From 2012 to 2016, over 800 people died nationwide in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes during the Thanksgiving holiday period (6:00 p.m. Wednesday to 5:59 a.m. Monday), making it the deadliest holiday on our roads, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).**

**During that same period in Kansas (2012-2016), over the 5-day Thanksgiving holiday, there were 188 alcohol-related crashes, resulting in 109 injuries and four fatalities.**

**AAA projects that nearly 51-million Americans will travel 50 miles or more away from home this Thanksgiving – a 3-point-3 percent increase over last year.**

**The Kansas Highway Patrol, along with local law enforcement, will be increasing patrols to foster safe roadways during the busy Thanksgiving holiday travel week, with a special eye out for impaired drivers.**

**AAA Kansas is reminding anyone headed out Wednesday night or throughout the Thanksgiving holiday weekend and planning to drink:**

- Buzzed driving is drunk driving. Don’t risk it.**
- Make a plan ahead of time to have a sober, designated driver**
- If you don’t have a designated driver, call a friend or family member, taxi or car share service such as Uber or Lyft to get you home safely**
- Never let family or friends drive if they have had too much alcohol to drink**

- **If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact law enforcement**

**Also consider downloading NHTSA's SaferRide NHTSA's SaferRide mobile app available on [Google Play](#) for Android devices and [Apple's iTunes Store](#). The free app allows users to call a taxi or a predetermined friend, and identifies the user's location so the user can be picked up.**

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