
TxDOT's five goals: reduce congestion, enhance safety, expand economic opportunity, improve air quality and increase the value of transportation assets.

For Immediate Release

TxDOT Urges Texans to Avoid a DWI This Labor Day Officers Work Overtime During Statewide Drunk Driving Crackdown

AUSTIN, TX — The Texas Department of Transportation, police departments, and sheriff's offices across Texas are working together to reduce impaired driving this summer and especially during the upcoming Labor Day weekend. TxDOT is illustrating the choice between getting a sober ride or risking a DWI by driving after drinking with an arresting image—unique vehicles that are a police patrol car on the front end and a taxi cab on the back end.

“The only way to be sure you’ll avoid a DWI is by never getting behind the wheel after drinking alcohol,” said Carol Rawson, TxDOT’s Traffic Operations Division Director. “We’re reminding Texans that there are many options they can choose for getting home that don’t include drinking and driving.”

The “Choose Your Ride” effort will incorporate modified patrol cars from police departments and sheriff's offices in communities with a high incidence of alcohol-related fatalities. TxDOT will also run new television spots, radio ads, billboards, wall postings, web and mobile phone ads along with targeted messages in major market bar and restaurant districts. Traditional and alternative media efforts will raise awareness of the consequences of a DWI conviction and the alternatives available to Texans: calling a cab, designating a sober driver ahead of time, using public transportation, staying put, calling a friend or family member for a ride, taking a pedicab, and more.

From August 20 to September 6, law enforcement statewide will be working overtime to find and arrest impaired drivers.

“Last year during the two-week crackdown, officers around the state worked nearly 18,000 combined hours of overtime specifically looking for intoxicated drivers,” said Commander Stephen Baker of the Austin Police Department. “If we pull you over and you’ve been drinking, you’re going to be arrested.”

Convicted first-time DWI offenders can pay a fine of up to \$2,000, lose their driver’s license for up to a year, and serve 180 days in jail. Safety officials say other costs associated with an impaired driving arrest and conviction can add up to more than \$17,000 for bail, legal fees, court appearances, court-ordered classes, vehicle insurance increases, and other expenses.

Of course, the consequences of driving under the influence can be much worst. In 2009, there were 27,108 alcohol-related crashes in Texas that resulted in 955 deaths and 17,542 injuries (preliminary data).

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and hundreds of local law enforcement agencies are participating in the annual *Drink, Drive, Go to Jail* campaign to reduce drunk driving on Texas roads.

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