
TxDOT's four goals: Maintain a safe system, address congestion, connect Texas communities, and be a Best-in-Class state agency

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DWI CRASH VICTIMS LEND THEIR 'FACES' TO ANTI-DRUNK DRIVING CAMPAIGN

Law enforcement plans crackdown on impaired driving over busy Fourth of July holiday weekend

AUSTIN — In an effort to save lives and prevent roadway crashes over the extended Fourth of July weekend, the Texas Department of Transportation is introducing its *Faces of Drunk Driving* safety campaign to urge motorists to be smart and drive sober. Like all holidays, Independence Day ranks among the deadliest times on our roadways, and last year was no exception with 133 alcohol-related crashes in Texas.

"On average, there is an alcohol-related traffic crash in Texas every 20 minutes," said TxDOT Executive Director Phil Wilson. "Drunk driving crashes are 100 percent preventable and so is the pain that comes with each one."

Throughout the month of July, TxDOT will host *Faces of Drunk Driving* events across the state at which safety advocates, law enforcement and victims of drunk driving will share their stories in front of 1,170 Texas flags, representing the number of people killed in alcohol-related crashes in Texas last year. More than 9,400 people also were seriously injured in alcohol-related crashes in 2012.

Helping TxDOT deliver this sobering message is 9-year-old Xitclalli "Chilli" Vasquez, who was paralyzed from the chest down after being hit by a drunk driver in Fort Worth on July 9, 2011 (just three days before her eighth birthday). Also sharing their story is the family of Aaron Pennywell, 20, who was killed by a drunk driver two years ago in Cypress. These stories, along with those of more than a dozen others impacted by drunk driving, can be found at www.FacesofDrunkDriving.com.

"If the possibility of killing yourself or someone else isn't a good enough reason to not drink and drive, you should know that being arrested for DWI also has longstanding, negative consequences," Wilson said. "DWI penalties include jail time, a suspended driver's license and as much as \$17,000 or more in fines, legal fees and other expenses. You and your family can't afford it, so be smart and safe while celebrating the holiday."

Law enforcement around Texas will conduct a "No Refusal" initiative over the Independence Day weekend. "No Refusal" operations allow for suspected drunk drivers to be pulled over and required by law to provide police with a breath or blood sample. Motorists found to be legally intoxicated (with a blood or breath alcohol content of .08 or higher) face arrest and prosecution.

For media inquiries, contact TxDOT Media Relations at MediaRelations@txdot.gov or (512) 463-8700.

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Texas Department of Transportation

The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining 80,000 miles of road and for supporting aviation, rail, and public transportation across the state. TxDOT and its 11,000 employees are committed to working with others to provide safe and reliable transportation solutions for Texas by maintaining a safe system, addressing congestion, connecting Texas communities, and being a Best in Class state agency. Find out more at www.txdot.gov. Fan us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/txdot; and follow us on Twitter, www.twitter.com/txdot.