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

Aug. 14, 2014

TxDOT, LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNER TO SAVE LIVES WITH 'DRINK. DRIVE. GO TO JAIL.' INITIATIVE BEGINNING AUG. 15

Campaign aims to deter drunk driving in weeks leading up to Labor Day holiday (media assets available at www.txdot.gov.)

AUSTIN – In Texas, there is a traffic crash about every 20 minutes involving a driver under the influence of alcohol. The Texas Department of Transportation hopes to lower this staggering statistic with the launch of its annual Labor Day “Drink. Drive. Go to Jail.” campaign, which reminds drivers and motorcyclists to avoid drinking and driving or else face severe consequences. The campaign, Aug. 15 through Sept. 1, coincides with the national increased enforcement period sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. During this time, Texas law enforcement officers step up their vigilance to arrest drunk drivers.

“Drinking and driving puts you and others at risk of being killed or injured,” said John Barton, TxDOT deputy executive director. “At the very least, you can face expensive fines, jail time and loss of your driver’s license. It’s just not worth it and it’s entirely preventable.”

In 2013, DUI-alcohol-related traffic fatalities accounted for 1 in 3 of all Texas roadway deaths — or nearly 1,100. During last year’s Labor Day weekend in Texas, nearly half (16) of the 35 holiday traffic fatalities were caused by drivers under the influence of alcohol.

Even small amounts of alcohol can impair a person’s ability to safely operate a vehicle. Alcohol slows reaction time, reduces the ability to properly gauge speed or distance, and impairs vision. All 50 states have established a threshold making it illegal to drive with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher. Drivers can be arrested with a BAC below .08 when a law enforcement officer suspects that an individual’s driving is impaired.

To remind people to plan ahead for a sober ride, TxDOT conducts media and outreach events across the state in the weeks leading up to Labor Day. Many of these events feature a vintage-style “DWI Not So Fun House,” which allows participants to experience the simulated effects of alcohol on their motor skills.

TxDOT also has developed SoberRides.org to help people quickly and easily find sober alternatives to drinking and driving. Options include:

- Calling a taxi
- Using mass transit
- Asking a sober friend or family member for a ride home
- Staying put

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

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Information contained in this report represents reportable data collected from Texas Peace Officer's Crash Reports (CR-3) received and processed by the Department as of July 9, 2014.

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. "Like" us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/txdot ; and follow us on Twitter, www.twitter.com/txdot .