

Press Release



Greene County Public Health
A Safe Communities Grantee of Ohio Department of Public Safety
Ohio State Highway Patrol-Traffic Safety Division
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Drive Merry, Bright, and Sober This Holiday Season. **Remember: Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving**

XENIA, OH — This holiday season, the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition, part of Greene County Public Health, is teaming up with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to remind all drivers about the dangers of drinking and driving. We'll be working together to remind everyone of the importance of planning a sober ride home before heading out to enjoy the holiday festivities and en route to seasonal travel destinations. This holiday season, and every day, remember: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*.

"The holidays are a special time for every community, and it's more important than ever for us to stress the importance of safe driving habits," said Jillian Drew, Safe Communities Coordinator and Health Educator at Greene County Public Health. "We know everyone is rushing around, finishing those last-minute errands and attending various holiday parties. But before you ever head out to the festivities, make sure you plan a sober ride home, because driving drunk should never be an option. Help us spread the message: Even one drink is one drink too many. *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*."

According to NHTSA, 37,133 people were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2017, and 29% (10,874) of those fatalities occurred in crashes during which a driver had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) over the legal limit of .08. In fact, 885 people lost their lives in traffic crashes involving a drunk driver during the month of December 2017 alone. The holidays prove to be extra dangerous to drivers, as more people — drivers and pedestrians alike — are out on the roads.

Drunk driving isn't the only risk on the road: Drug-impaired driving is also an increasing problem, for men and for women alike. If drivers are impaired by any substance — alcohol or other drugs — they should not get behind the wheel of a vehicle. It is illegal in all states to drive impaired by alcohol or drugs. Remember: Driving while impaired is illegal, period. The bottom line is this: *If You Feel Different, You Drive Different*. It's that simple.

Drinking and driving should never be combined. It's essential to plan a sober ride in advance if the holiday celebration will include alcohol. The alternative could change your life, not to mention the lives of your passengers, of pedestrians, or of other drivers and passengers nearby.

This holiday season, the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition, Greene County Public Health, and NHTSA urge drivers to designate a sober driver before heading out for the evening. If you plan on drinking, plan on not driving.

Party with a Plan

First and foremost: Plan ahead. Be honest with yourself: You know whether you'll be drinking. If you plan to drink, plan for a sober driver to take you home. Is it your turn to be the designated driver? Take that role seriously — your friends are relying on you.

- Remember that it is never okay to drink and drive. Even if you've had only one alcoholic beverage, designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, report them by calling 1-800-GRAB-DUI or *DUI when it is safe to do so.
- Have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take the keys away and make arrangements to get your friend home safely.

For more information about the *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving* campaign, visit <https://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/drunk-driving/buzzed-driving-drunk-driving/holiday-season>. For more information on the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition, call 937-374-5683 or email jdrew@gcph.info.

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