

Press Release



Public Health
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Greene County

Greene County Public Health
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Before You Celebrate with the Ghouls and Goblins, Plan for a Sober Ride *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*

XENIA, OH — Halloween is a beloved holiday tradition in America, with millions of people, young and old, working on their best costumes and gearing up for a night of candy and festivities. The evening also comes with parties and get-togethers, as well as an increase in drunk drivers on the roads. To help spread the message that *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is teaming up with Greene County Safe Communities through Greene County Public Health to remind everyone of the dangers of drunk driving. Drivers should be extra cautious on Halloween, as more pedestrians are out at night on the hunt for candy. If your night involves alcohol, plan for a sober ride home. Remember: It's never safe to drink and drive.

Between 2015 and 2019, there were 126 drunk-driving fatalities on Halloween night (6 p.m. October 31 – 5:59 a.m. November 1). According to NHTSA, 41% of all people killed in motor vehicle crashes on Halloween night from 2015 to 2019 were in crashes involving a drunk driver. Adults between the ages of 21 and 34 had the highest percentage (62%) of fatalities in drunk-driving crashes on Halloween night in 2019.

“Even though Halloween is on a Sunday this year, we’re certain to see extra gatherings throughout the weekend, and every single participant should plan their sober ride home in advance” said Melissa Howell, Health Commissioner, Greene County Public Health. “Even one drink can impair judgement. You should never put yourself, or others, at risk because you made the choice to drink and drive. Even one drink can be one too many. Remember: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving.*”

Tragically, about one-third of all traffic crash fatalities in the United States involve drunk drivers (with blood alcohol concentrations at or above .08 grams per deciliter). In 2019, there were 10,142 people killed in drunk-driving crashes. Do not contribute to these senseless deaths by driving drunk this Halloween. Drivers should also keep an eye out for pedestrians — whether they be children trick-or-treating or adults who have had too much to drink. Walking while intoxicated can also be deadly, as lack of attention to their surroundings could put pedestrians at risk of getting hit by a vehicle.

“We want our community to have a fun night out on Halloween, but to also stay safe and make responsible choices,” said Howell. “In today’s world, there are many options available to drivers to help them get home safely if they’ve been drinking. We expect drivers to refrain from driving after drinking,” she said.

Nationally, it is illegal to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher, except in Utah, where the limit is .05 g/dL. And the costs can be financial, too: If you're caught drinking and driving, you could face jail time, lose your driver's license and your vehicle, and pay up to \$10,000 in attorney's fees, fines, car towing, higher insurance rates, and lost wages.

Celebrate with a Plan

If you plan to head out for a night of Halloween partying, follow these simple tips for a safe and happy evening:

- 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 available, use an Uber, Lyft, taxi or other local ride service.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, call 1-800-GRAB-DUI or *DUI on your cell phone when it is safe to do so.
- Do you have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take the keys away and arrange to get your friend home safely.

Always remember: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*. For more information, visit www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving.

For more information on impaired driving, visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving>.

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