

Press Release



Greene County Public Health
A Safe Communities Grantee of Ohio Department of Public Safety
Ohio State Highway Patrol-Traffic Safety Division
360 Wilson Drive, Xenia, OH 45385



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**Make It to the Table This Thanksgiving Remember:
*Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving***

XENIA, OH — This Thanksgiving holiday, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is teaming up with the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition to make sure you make it to the Thanksgiving table. With the Thanksgiving holiday kicking off a very merry time of year, it’s essential to take some time to remember that *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*. If your plans to celebrate include alcohol, plan for a sober driver.

Drunk-driving-related crashes spike during the Thanksgiving holiday season. According to NHTSA, 185 people were killed during the 2020 Thanksgiving period (6 p.m. Wednesday, November 25 through 5:59 a.m. Monday, November 30). Tragically, from 2016-2020, 821 people died in alcohol-impaired crashes during the entire Thanksgiving holiday period (6 p.m. the Wednesday before Thanksgiving through 5:59 a.m. the Monday after Thanksgiving). During this same period, males were more likely than females to be killed in an alcohol-impaired crash, with males accounting for more than one-quarter of fatalities.

“We know friends and families will be especially excited to gather around the Thanksgiving table this year,” said Loressa Gonyer, Greene County Safe Communities Coordinator. “Unfortunately, drunk driving is a real threat to our community, and that threat increases during holidays like Thanksgiving. Driving drunk is deadly and illegal, and no one should ever take that risk.”

According to NHTSA, 11,654 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2020 that involved an alcohol-impaired driver. On average, more than 10,000 people were killed each year from 2016 to 2020, and one person was killed in a drunk driving crash every 45 minutes in 2020. Therefore, the Safe Communities Coalition and all Greene County Law Enforcement officials, city and county alike, are working together with NHTSA to remind drivers that drunk driving is not only illegal, but also a matter of life and death. As you head out to festivities during this Thanksgiving holiday, remember: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*.

The Greene County Safe Communities Coalition and NHTSA are reminding citizens of the many resources available to get them home safely. “Drunk driving is not acceptable behavior, especially when there are so many safe alternatives to get you home safely,” said Gonyer.

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Ms. Gonyer recommends these safe alternatives to drinking and driving:

- 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 a ride service, call a taxi or a sober friend to get home safely.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, use your phone to dial #677 or *DUI, or call 1-800-GRAB-DUI
- Do you have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take the keys away and make arrangements to get your friend home safely.

By working together, we can save lives and help keep America's roadways safe. Please join us in sharing the lifesaving message *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving* during the holiday weekend.

For more information, please visit www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drun-driving. For more information about the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition, please contact Loressa Gonyer at lgonyer@gcph.info or by phone at 937-374-5655.

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