



Press Release

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Partners Support Largest-Ever Drunk Driving Enforcement Crackdown As Labor Day Drunk Driving Fatality Trends Announced

As Labor Day approaches and millions of Americans hit the roads in record numbers for one last summer vacation, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) remind Americans this Labor Day weekend that the toughest and largest-ever enforcement crackdown on impaired drivers remains a force to be reckoned with.

New trend data released by NHTSA shows an average of 205 people died in crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher each Labor Day weekend since 1996. In 2005, 196 people died in the same kind of drunk driving crashes (accounting for 39 percent of 506 total traffic fatalities) over Labor Day weekend. This is an increase from the 30 percent of all traffic fatalities that involved a drunk driver in 2005.

The sheer manpower behind the crackdown is required to help save lives and prevent injuries. The campaign "*Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest*" includes an \$11 million national television and radio advertising campaign, funded by the Department of Transportation and, in partnership with thousands of law enforcement officers conducting sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols. More than 11,500 enforcement agencies are participating nationwide.

"We are working closely with law enforcement and are taking off the gloves in the fight against drunk driving," NHTSA Administrator Nicole Nason said. "If you drive drunk you will be arrested. In 2005 there were 12,945 fatalities in crashes where the driver or motorcycle operator had a BAC of .08 and above, this is unacceptable."

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“If the millions of Americans traveling on the roads this Labor Day weekend did not drive drunk, we could cut the number of vehicle crash fatalities by nearly 40 percent, saving almost 200 lives this weekend alone. We could also save 128 additional lives over the Labor Day weekend if everyone wore their safety belt,” said Glynn Birch, MADD national president.

With so many families taking to the road this weekend, state highway safety agencies nationwide are warning those who may consider driving drunk that they should reconsider. “Every state is focused on getting drunk drivers off the road. We are sick and tired of these needless deaths. If you drive drunk, we will arrest you and there will be serious consequences,” said Lt. Col. Jim Champagne, Chairman of the Governors Highway Safety Association, the organization which represents state highway safety agencies.

The nationwide enforcement campaign began Friday, August 18 and will continue through Labor Day weekend. Coinciding with the national launch of the crackdown, NHTSA released new 2005 statistics. State-by-state statistics for alcohol-related fatalities were also released and can be found online at: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/RNotes/2006/810644.pdf>.

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) is the states' voice on highway safety. The 501C3 association represents the highway safety programs of the states and territories on the “human behavioral aspects” of highway safety. Areas of focus include: occupant protection, impaired driving and speed enforcement, as well as motorcycle, school bus, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and traffic records.

Founded in 1980, MADD is a 501C3 organization with about two million members and supporters, as well as 400 affiliates nationwide. MADD's mission is to stop drunk driving, support the victims of this violent crime, and prevent underage drinking.

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