

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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TROOPERS WORK TO ENSURE SAFE HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Plan Impaired-driving Crackdown During Christmas and New Year's

MONTGOMERY – All available troopers will be on duty throughout the holiday season, according to Public Safety Director Col. W.M. Coppage. They will step up patrols and conduct special enforcement details such as checkpoints and line patrols during holiday travel periods.

Coppage said troopers especially will target drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs during the holidays. Alabama troopers and state police nationwide will take part in the Operation CARE (Combined Accident Reduction Effort) Lifesaver Weekend Dec. 16-18. This pre-holiday safety campaign combines enforcement and safety education to encourage motorists to refrain from drinking and driving, to buckle up, and to obey all traffic laws.

“Christmas is supposed to be the most joyous time of the year, yet each year this holiday season turns into tragedy for so many families who lose loved ones on our roads,” said Gov. Bob Riley. “Our state troopers will be out in force to take impaired and dangerous drivers off our roads so we can avert more tragedies.”

“Public Safety’s goal during the holidays and throughout the year is to prevent needless deaths and injuries caused by impaired driving, speeding and other dangerous driving behavior,” said Coppage. “Troopers will make every effort to ensure safe holiday travel, and they ask motorists also to keep their focus on safety during the holidays.” He also encouraged motorists to make sure their vehicles are in good working order before holiday travel, and said troopers would be available to assist motorists.

The Alabama Department of Public Safety estimates that 15 people may lose their lives in traffic crashes in the state during the 78-hour Christmas travel period, which begins at 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 23, and ends at midnight Monday, Dec. 26.

In 2004, six people died in traffic crashes on Alabama roadways during the 78-hour Christmas period, all on rural roadways. Alcohol was a factor in at least two of the deaths, and two of the wreck victims were not using safety belts.

The traffic fatality prediction for New Year’s is that 16 people may die in traffic crashes in Alabama during the 78-hour period from 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 30, through midnight Monday, Jan. 2, 2006.

Last year, 22 people died during the 78-hour New Year’s travel period, 18 on rural roads and four in urban areas. At least 10 of the deaths involved alcohol, and eight of the crash victims were not using safety belts.

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