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Troopers Step Up Patrols for Holiday Safety *Grants Fuel Extra Enforcement*

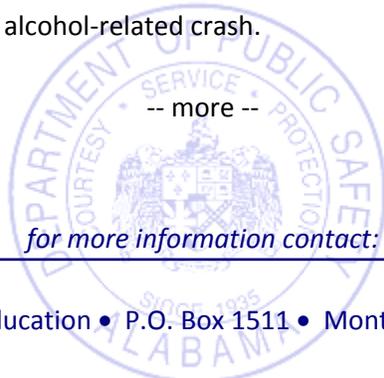
MONTGOMERY – Alabama state troopers will be out in force during the Christmas and New Year’s holidays, stepping up enforcement activity in an effort to protect the lives and safety of Alabama motorists. Enforcement plans include extra patrols, sobriety checkpoints, line patrols, LIDAR speed detection, and other special enforcement details.

Public Safety Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy said troopers, along with law enforcement and traffic safety agencies throughout the state and nation, will be aggressively working to curtail impaired driving during the holidays. He said troopers also will target those other violations that often contribute to crashes, including speeding, following too closely, driver distraction, and improper passing.

“An additional benefit of the increased trooper presence is that it serves as a visible reminder to motorists to voluntarily slow down and drive safely,” said Murphy. He said the extra enforcement effort is made possible through grant funding provided by the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs’ Law Enforcement/Traffic Safety Section.

Troopers will utilize DPS’s fleet of BAT-mobiles — nine trucks equipped with breath alcohol testing equipment — at many of the checkpoint locations. Grant funding for the BAT-mobiles was awarded by Gov. Bob Riley and administered by ADECA. Testing equipment was provided by the Department of Forensic Sciences.

“If holiday celebrations include alcohol, I strongly advocate designating a nondrinking driver, taking advantage of transportation options available in your area, or making other plans,” said Murphy. He also reminded motorists that the use of seat belts and child restraints is often the best defense in the event of an alcohol-related crash.



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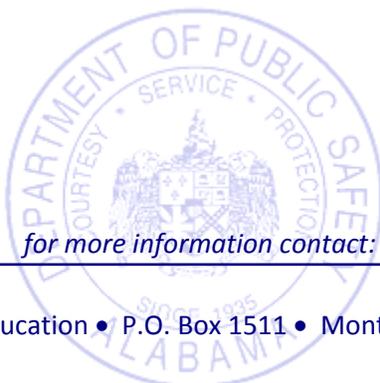
Murphy said trooper-reported traffic deaths in Alabama had declined for three consecutive years, and that DPS's goal is to build on that success through the holidays and to year's end. He said year-to-date trooper-reported traffic fatalities reflect 103 fewer people killed, when compared to the same period in 2008 (510 v. 613).

The 78-hour Christmas travel period begins at 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 24, and ends at midnight Sunday, Dec. 27. In 2008, eight people, including one pedestrian and one motorcyclist, died in traffic crashes on Alabama roadways during the 102-hour Christmas period. Alcohol was a factor in at least three of the deaths, and four of the six vehicle occupants killed were not using seat belts.

The 78-hour New Year's travel period extends from 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 31, through midnight Sunday, Jan. 3, 2010. Last year, 14 people, including one motorcyclist, one pedestrian and one pedal cyclist, died in traffic crashes in the state during the 102-hour New Year's travel period. At least five of the deaths involved alcohol, and nine of the 11 vehicle occupants were not using seat belts.

To help ensure the safety of law enforcement officers, wrecker workers and other emergency responders working roadside with emergency lights activated, Murphy issued a reminder regarding the state's "move-over" law. "Move over one lane when possible, or slow down on two-lane roads or when moving over isn't possible or safe." Murphy said warnings would be issued to violators until active enforcement of the "move-over" law begins Feb. 1.

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