Alcohol, Cannabis and Driving

Talking Points

* Driving drunk or high is dangerous, which is why most Washingtonians don’t do it or approve of it. Be prepared, be safe and don’t drive drunk or high. Make a plan before you party.
* Driving drunk or high increases your chances of being in a serious or fatal crash.
* Everyone wants their friends and family to get home safe when they drive, especially after they consume. We want that too. The best way to make that happen is to plan to make a plan first.
* Making a plan is easy. You can:
  + Choose a designated driver
  + Take a taxi or rideshare – like Lyft
  + Use public transportation like a bus or cab
  + Spend the night
  + Leave your car at home
* Washingtonians believe in traffic safety and most agree that impairment begins as soon as a person starts consuming alcohol or cannabis.
* Most people know that it’s a myth that using cannabis after drinking will not make someone a sober and safe driver. Using marijuana after drinking alcohol increases your crash risk. The best way to make sure you get home safely after consuming is to make a plan before you start.
* We all have a role to play in keeping our roads safe for everyone. Most people who see someone about to drive impaired will intervene. Stepping in can save a life. Arrange or provide a ride. Wait with someone impaired until they are sober. Arrange for the person to stay where they are. Ask someone else to help. If all else fails, call 911.
* If you’re going out to drink or use marijuana, plan ahead.
* If you see someone impaired, it’s ok to intervene.

**HVE Patrols**

* Law enforcement agencies around the state will be conducting extra DUI patrols during the holiday, but safe driving isn’t just a law enforcement issue, it’s an issue for everyone and it’s up to everyone to take action.
* The holiday season increases the probability that there will be a higher volume of impaired drivers on the road.
* While the extra patrols will increase the likelihood that someone driving impaired will be arrested and prosecuted, the goal is not to apprehend impaired drivers but to prevent people from driving impaired in the first place.
* The High Visibility Enforcement patrols reinforce our Plan Before You Party campaign. We want people who plan to consume alcohol, marijuana or other drugs to make a plan to get home *before* they partake. Knowing that there are extra law enforcement patrols is an extra inducement to people to remind them to make a plan before heading out to drink or get high.
* With more fatalities occurring due to drivers impaired by more than one substance – usually alcohol and marijuana -- law enforcement is stepping up with programs to help detect these impaired drivers. These include:
  + **Law enforcement phlebotomists** – a grant to train and certify law enforcement officers to draw blood from suspect impaired drivers, allowing them to process more impaired drivers in less time. (Pierce County).
  + **Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) program** – a grant for the training of law enforcement officers to recognize impairment in drivers under the influence of drugs other than or in addition to alcohol. Many law enforcement agencies in the state of Washington participate.

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