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**Media Contacts:**

Mark Medalen, Washington Traffic Safety Commission, 360-280-8008, [mmedalen@wtsc.wa.gov](mailto:mmedalen@wtsc.wa.gov)

Edica Esqueda, Washington Traffic Safety Commission, 360-725-9886, [eesqueda@wtsc.wa.gov](mailto:eesqueda@wtsc.wa.gov)

**Washington Increases DUI Patrols Leading Up to Labor Day Weekend**

*New report shows spike in percentage of fatal crashes caused by drivers impaired by multiple substances*

OLYMPIA, WA – Law enforcement agencies across Washington will increase DUI (Driving Under the Influence) patrols August 17 through September 3 to keep drivers safe during what is typically the deadliest time of the year on the state’s roadways.

More than 160 local law enforcement agencies and the Washington State Patrol will participate in the emphasis patrols in search of drivers under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Drivers impaired by alcohol, marijuana and other drugs are involved in nearly half of all traffic deaths in Washington. In 2017 alone, 250 people were killed in such crashes.

“These tragedies are completely preventable,” said Darrin Grondel, director of the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC). “As a community, we can end DUI-related deaths. We are asking for help. If you are in the position to prevent someone else from driving impaired, please be bold. Offer to call them a ride or give them a safe place to sober up.”

A new WTSC report[[1]](#footnote-1) provides insights into what has become the most common form of driver impairment — poly-drug use (two or more drugs or a combination of alcohol and drugs). Beginning in 2012, the number of poly-drug impaired drivers involved in fatal crashes has increased by an average of 15 percent every year. [[2]](#footnote-2)

As of 2016, one in four of all Washington traffic deaths involve a poly-drug impaired driver. The most common combination is alcohol and marijuana.

Misconceptions about marijuana use, especially among young drivers, could be one factor in this trend. A statewide roadside survey included in the WTSC report shows that of the young drivers (ages 15-20) who admit to driving after marijuana use, more than half believe marijuana makes their driving better.

“This is an especially dangerous belief if, for example, a driver uses marijuana to compensate for the consumption of another substance that impairs driving ability, such as alcohol,” said Staci Hoff, PhD, Research Director, WTSC. “The deadly consequence of combining these two particular substances is very apparent in all our fatal crash data.”

WTSC is encouraging people to “Make a Plan *Before* You Party” in order to get home safe.

“There are so many ways to travel safely, from taxis and ridesharing apps to public transportation, that driving drunk or driving high should never be an option.” said Grondel. “Just a few minutes of advance planning can prevent a terrible tragedy and costly arrest.”

For more information and ideas for making a plan before you party, visit [wadrivetozero.com/DUI](http://wadrivetozero.com/DUI/).

**ABOUT WASHINGTON TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION**

The Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) is the state’s designated highway safety office. We share a vision with other state and local public agencies to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries. For information on the Target Zero Plan, visit <http://www.targetzero.com>. Washington deadly crash data is available by state and county here: <http://wtsc.wa.gov/research-data/quarterly-target-zero-data/>.

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1. Marijuana and Alcohol Involvement in Fatal Crashes: https://www.dropbox.com/s/jkb5auzou15ktui/Marijuana%20and%20Alcohol%20Involvement%20in%20Fatal%20Crashes%20in%20WA\_FINAL.pdf?dl=0 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.dropbox.com/s/n03gsh7er1s1buf/WTSC\_PolyDrugCharts\_April2018.pdf?dl=0 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)