

**Summer DUI – Media Talking Points 2018**

**What:** WTSC is running a High Visibility DUI Enforcement campaign to improve road safety during the summer, which is the state’s deadliest driving period.

**When:** The campaign and increased enforcement will be carried out from August 17 – September 3.

**Where:** This is a statewide effort involving more than 160 agencies.

**Why:** Labor Day weekend is traditionally one of the most dangerous times on Washington’s roadways. In the past five years, 2,550 people were killed in traffic crashes. Half of these deaths were related to impaired driving from alcohol, marijuana or other drugs and these tragic losses are completely preventable.

Washington is seeing an increase in fatal crashes among poly-drugged drivers (impaired by two or more drugs or a combination of alcohol and drugs). Beginning in 2012, poly-drugged drivers became the most common type of impaired drivers involved in fatal crashes. Since then, the number of poly-drug drivers involved in fatal crashes has increased by an average of 15 percent every year.

**How:** We are asking everyone to be responsible with their planning and are recommending a number of alternatives to driving under the influence. Our awareness campaign uses both traditional and social media to reach drivers, with a particular focus on young male drivers.

**Q&A Guide**

**What is the goal of the increased patrols?**

* Added patrols aim to make our roads safer for everyone during summer, which is Washington state’s deadliest driving period. This time of the year is so dangerous due to a combination of an increased volume of drivers and higher probability of impaired driving.
* This effort is aligned with our Target Zero vision and dedication to reducing traffic deaths and serious injuries to zero by the year 2030.
* We want to do everything possible to ensure people safely enjoy the summer festivities with their family, friends and loved ones.
* While those who choose to drive while impaired this summer run a strong chance of being arrested and successfully prosecuted, our goal is not to increase DUI arrests.
* By informing the public of our High Visibility DUI Enforcement campaign, we hope residents will take a few minutes to arrange for a safe trip home and make the roads safer for everyone.

**How long has Target Zero been in place and why aren’t we seeing a decrease in traffic fatalities?**

* Traffic fatalities continue to occur for a number of reasons:
  + The economic recovery has led Americans to drive more for both work and pleasure
  + In Washington, the strong population growth is fueled by people who move to the state. This means more drivers and traffic on our roads.
  + Increased access to impairing substances. In 2011, Washington expanded alcohol sales to grocery stores. Marijuana was made legal in 2012 and first sold in 2014.
  + Along with access, there are many misconceptions about these substances and their effects on a person’s ability to drive. Some people don’t realize combining these substances amplify impairment.
  + Distracted drivers (28 percent of crashes involve distraction from 2013 to 2017)
  + Impairment, speeding, and distraction related deaths continue to increase. Washington pedestrian deaths more than doubled between 2013 and 2017 from 50 to 109.
* Target Zero is tackling each of these issues individually to help address and drive behavior change.

**Can you give me more details about poly-drug impairment?**

* Poly-drug use means that a driver’s blood test was positive for alcohol and a drug or multiple drugs. Among drivers who tested positive, nearly 45 percent tested positive for more than a single substance.
* The most common combination found together is alcohol and marijuana. The deadly consequences of combining these two impairing substances and driving are apparent in Washington fatal crash data.
* In Washington, driver impairment due to alcohol and/or drugs is the number one contributing factor in fatal crashes and plays a part in nearly half of all traffic deaths.
* Since 2012, Washington has seen a significant increase in fatal crashes among poly-drug drivers (impaired by two or more drugs or a combination of alcohol and drugs). Poly-drug impairment is now the most common type of impairment in deadly crashes.
* According to Washington’s Roadside Self-Report Marijuana Survey:
  + More than half (53 percent) of drivers ages 15-20 believe marijuana use made their driving better. This is a significantly higher rate than drivers ages 21-25 (13.7 percent) and drivers ages 26-35 (17.4 percent).
  + Among drivers who have used marijuana in the past year, only 36 percent believe that marijuana impairs a person’s ability to drive safely if used within two hours of driving, compared to 77 percent of drivers who have not used marijuana in the previous year.

**What can people do to make themselves safer on the roads and avoid a DUI arrest?**

* We are urging everyone to plan ahead and organize a safe ride to keep the roads safe for everyone.
* If you can’t be a designated driver, choose to be the designated planner.
* Just a few minutes of advanced planning saves lives and helps people avoid a life-changing arrest with a number of consequences:
  + loss of license
  + employment risk
  + jail time
  + financial challenges due to fines, legal, medical and insurance costs.
* Today there are so many options for getting home safely, from taxis, ridesharing apps and public transportation to arranging to stay overnight. Hosts also play a role in ensuring guests go home with a sober driver.
* Additionally, many people report finding themselves in situations where they can intervene to stop someone from driving impaired. Take the bold step to offer to find that person a ride, or help them stay where they are until they are no longer impaired.
* The Washington Recovery Help Line is an anonymous and confidential 24-hour help line that provides crisis intervention and referral services for Washington residents. Call 866-789-1511.
* We also remind everyone to always wear a seat belt, watch your speed and distance to give yourself time to react, and report dangerous drivers by calling 9-1-1.