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All impaired drivers to be tested during “No Refusal Weekend”

Initiative is part of You drink. You drive. YOU LOSE.

The Kansas Attorney General’s Office, the Kansas Department of Transportation and law enforcement agencies from across the state are joining forces to crack down on impaired driving during the upcoming No Refusal Weekend, when all suspected impaired drivers who refuse breath testing will be subject to blood testing for alcohol.

Several northeast Kansas counties are participating in the No Refusal Weekend, Aug. 19-20, to reinforce the purpose behind this year’s You drink. You drive. YOU LOSE. campaign. Anyone driving with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 grams per deciliter or higher is considered legally impaired. However, many impaired drivers refuse to submit to BAC testing in an attempt to avoid, or have reduced, the criminal sanctions they could face upon conviction.

“Alcohol and driving don’t mix,” Attorney General Derek Schmidt said. “Impaired driving is no accident—nor is it a victimless crime. The No Refusal Weekend brings prosecutors and law enforcement together to combat this danger on our roadways.”

On average in Kansas, impaired drivers cause 25 to 30 percent of traffic fatalities. Kansas averages nearly five people injured every day and one person killed every three days in alcohol-related crashes.

In 2016 alone, Kansas saw 1,119 impaired driving crashes where at least one driver was over .08 BAC.

“The aim of these efforts is to reduce the number of preventable deaths and injuries that occur when impaired drivers take to Kansas roads,” said Kansas Transportation Secretary Richard Carlson. “Think before you drink. Plan a safe ride home. Help us keep every friend, family

member, and stranger from becoming another statistic. Let's drive to zero fatalities on Kansas roadways."

This No Refusal Weekend, law enforcement officials will work in coordination with prosecutors and judges to quickly obtain blood draw warrants for drivers who refuse BAC testing. With the approval of a judge, anyone suspected of impaired driving who unlawfully refuses to provide a breath sample is subject to blood testing at the scene, a medical facility or nearest jail facility. The program helps ensure that prosecutors obtain the scientific evidence needed to effectively pursue cases involving impaired driving.

"Law enforcement is highly trained to identify impaired drivers and we will be out in full force to stop them," KHP Col. Mark Bruce said. "The safety of our roads and residents is our primary concern."

You drink. You drive. YOU LOSE. is supported by KDOT through a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration grant. The campaign includes high visibility enforcement around the clock. Officers will be especially vigilant at night, when the likelihood of impaired driving is increased. Impaired drivers face up to one year in jail, suspension of their driving privileges, fines and other costs up to \$10,000 as well as the mandatory installation of an ignition interlock device on their vehicle.

The You drink. You drive. YOU LOSE. campaign runs through Sept. 3 and includes increased education efforts, public service announcements and high-intensity law enforcement saturation from 150 agencies across the state.

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