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Safety initiative aims to reduce impaired driving during 4th of July holiday

TOPEKA – Kansas law enforcement officials are joining other states in a national effort to crack down on impaired driving during the July 4th holiday by participating in the safety campaign, “If You Feel Different, You Drive Different.” The campaign’s goal is to deter impaired driving and reduce alcohol and drug-related motor vehicle crashes and fatalities.

According to the Kansas Department of Transportation, the state recorded 2,149 alcohol-related crashes in 2019. That’s an average of an alcohol-related crash occurring about every four hours every day of the year. To help reduce these crashes, law enforcement will be out in force from noon on July 3 to 6:00 p.m. on July 5. Kansas allows publicized sobriety checkpoints throughout the state.

“For many Kansans, this 4th of July will be the first time in months family and friends will gather to celebrate,” said Secretary Lorenz. “Keep safety top of mind by designating a driver to get you and your loved ones home safely.”

Drivers with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) above Kansas’ legal limit of .08% are considered alcohol-impaired by law, making it illegal to operate or attempt to operate a motor vehicle.

“With the July 4th holiday typically wrapping up late into the evening, dark conditions and impaired driving puts our residents at high risk for a vehicle crash or even a fatality,” said KDOT Traffic Safety Manager Chris Bortz. “In 2019, for example, 76 Kansans died in alcohol related crashes.”

KDOT and Kansas law enforcement officials remind drivers to plan ahead before celebrating. If a person has drunk alcohol or used marijuana or other illegal drugs, do not let them drive and do not ride in a vehicle with them. Designate a driver in advance who has not consumed alcohol or used marijuana or other illegal drugs. You also can contact a ride-sharing service.

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s “If You Feel Different, You Drive Different,” campaign is funded by federal traffic safety funds administered by KDOT. For more information about impaired driving, visit KTSRO.org.

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