
DECEMBER DWI MOBILIZATION: PRE-ENFORCEMENT NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HUBBARD COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT WILL CHILL OUT DRUNK DRIVERS DURING INCREASED ENFORCEMENT IN DECEMBER

Hubbard County, Minn. — Local law enforcement agencies will increase DWI patrols as part of a statewide DWI enforcement effort in December to combat the potentially deadly and dangerous holiday celebration period.

During Minnesota Decembers, 2008–2010, there were 89 traffic deaths and 24 were alcohol-related.

In Hubbard County during 2008–2010, alcohol-related crashes accounted for 10 deaths and 35 serious injuries. During the same period, 365 were arrested for DWI.

There was an average of 170 alcohol-related traffic deaths annually during the last five years in Minnesota — accounting for one-third of all state's total road deaths annually. Alcohol-related deaths have been declining in recent years — in 2010, there were 131 alcohol-related deaths, the fewest on record. The Hubbard County Sheriff's Office feels enhanced enforcement campaigns have helped to prevent these tragedies. Each year, more than 30,000 people are arrested for DWI; one in seven Minnesota drivers has a DWI on record.

The campaign is coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) Office of Traffic Safety. Around 400 Minnesota law enforcement agencies will participate in the effort to identify and arrest impaired drivers, and encourage motorists to make safe decisions.

Participating agencies in Hubbard County are: The Hubbard County Sheriff's Office and the Park Rapids Police Department.

The holidays are a time for celebrating. They are not a time to throw common sense and safe driving choices out the window. Avoid the potentially deadly consequences of driving impaired, as well as the heavy costs and personal grief of a DWI — plan for a safe and sober ride.

A DWI offense can result in loss of license for up to a year, thousands in costs and possible jail time. Stronger DWI sanctions are in effect for all repeat DWI offenders, as well as for motorists arrested for a first-time DWI with a 0.16 and above alcohol-concentration level. Under these sanctions, DWI offenders must use ignition interlock for at least a year or face at least one year without driving privileges. Interlock requires a driver to provide a breath sample under 0.02 for the vehicle to start. Safety officials say interlock ensures DWI offenders are driving legally and safely. Potential participants of program can learn more at www.minnesotaignitioninterlock.org.

The Hubbard County Sheriff's Office reminds area motorists to plan ahead for a safe ride home before celebrating: designate a sober driver, take advantage of public transportation, or spend the night at the location of the celebration. Families should let their loved ones know that they are willing and available to offer a safe ride at anytime if needed.

The Hubbard County Sheriff's Office asks that motorists report impaired driving — call 911 when witnessing impaired driving behavior. Witnesses must be prepared to provide location, license plate and observed dangerous behavior.

The DWI enforcement and education effort is funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and is a component of the state's *Toward Zero Deaths (TZD)* traffic safety program. A primary vision of the *TZD* program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. *TZD* focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes — education, enforcement, engineering and emergency trauma response.

