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Enjoy the Holidays Intact: Drive Sober or Don't Drive

Missoula Police Department Increases Patrols Through Beginning of Year

Missoula, Mont. — As Montanans celebrate this festive season with holiday parties and end-of-year celebrations, the Missoula Police Department is increasing patrols through January 1, 2013, to deter impaired, unsafe driving and keep the public safe on Montana roads.

“We’ll be concentrating on keeping impaired drivers off the road, deterring speeding and encouraging the proper use of safety belts and child restraints,” said Sergeant Greg Amundsen. “This is a time of year with many parties and lots of merriment, but there is nothing to celebrate if you get a DUI, crash your vehicle, or injure or kill someone.”

Montana’s legal limit for Blood Alcohol Content is 0.08 — the point at which a driver will be charged with a DUI. But the Missoula Police Department reminds motorists that any amount of alcohol can impact their ability to drive — especially when combined with prescription drugs, illegal substances or fatigue.

“Buzzed driving is drunk driving, and someone who shows impairment below .08 BAC can still be charged with a DUI,” said Sergeant Greg Amundsen. “The only sure way to make sure you don’t get a DUI and don’t hurt yourself or someone else in a drunk driving collision is to *NOT* get behind the wheel.”

Law enforcement agencies throughout the state are stepping up patrols through the holiday season. Together with the Montana Department of Transportation, they’re encouraging Montanans to exercise their choice to prevent impaired driving. MDT’s new statewide public information campaign urges Montanans to be the “jaws of life” *literally* — to use their powers of persuasion to do everything possible to stop someone from driving impaired and ending up in a situation where the real Jaws of Life are called to extricate loved ones in a serious car crash.

Tips and tools for planning a safe ride home, in addition to Myth Crasher videos demonstrating a light-hearted approach to the serious topic of stopping impaired driving, can be found at plan2live.mt.gov, along with these reminders:

- **Designate a driver.** Before the fun begins, text friends to know who will be the sober driver.
- **Arrange for a pick up.** The designated driver doesn’t have to be at the party.
- **Keep ride options on speed dial.** Program the number for a taxi, friend, neighbor and/or parent, so they’re ready at a push of a button.
- **Call a taxi or ride home program.** Services listed at plan2live.mt.gov.
- **Plan your own ride program.** If hosting a party, have a plan with taxis or designated drivers to get guests home safely.
- **Plan to spend the night.** Crashing on a couch is better than crashing a car.
- **Know your limit.** Using a blood alcohol calculator can provide a general idea of blood alcohol levels. But remember blood alcohol content will still rise *after* a drink has been consumed, and buzzed driving is drunk driving and can be charged as a DUI.

“We want everyone to enjoy this holiday season with friends and family, not behind bars or in the hospital,” said Sergeant Greg Amundsen. “Please remind loved ones to buckle up and do everything possible to stop someone from driving impaired.”

Additional patrols are funded by the Montana Department of Transportation Selective Traffic Enforcement Programs' STEP grants.

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