

DRINK AND DRUG DRIVER FIGURES CLIMB 20%; POLICE CHIEFS DISAPPOINTED WITH INCREASE

SCOTLAND's top police officers have expressed their disappointment at the returns from the first week of the 2007 Summer Safety Campaign being co-ordinated by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) in conjunction with the country's eight police forces.

"It seems like some drivers are still not heeding the message," said Chief Superintendent Mike McCormick, Casualty Reduction Portfolio Lead for the ACPOS Road Policing Business Area. "Despite the high number of tests conducted, it is disheartening to see that more drivers are showing positive or refusing the requirement to give a breath test."

During the first week of the campaign there were 131 positive or refused breath tests of the 2508 tests conducted following moving traffic offences on the nation's roads.

One hundred and thirty-one drivers (117 male and 14 female) were apprehended compared to 109 in last year's summer safety campaign's first week – an increase of 20 per cent. However, there were only eight positive results or refused breath tests by drivers (five male and three female) who were involved in collisions where there were no injuries compared to 20 last year. And, where there were collisions with injuries, six drivers had positive results or refused breath tests as opposed to two last year – an increase of four drivers for 300 per cent.

Figures collated from all eight police forces show that there were 258 collisions with no injuries in the first week of this year's campaign compared to 563 in 2006 – a 55 per cent reduction. In collisions where there were injuries, the total dropped from 168 last year to 72 this year – a 58 per cent reduction.

For the first time, ACPOS is able to present figures broken down by age grouping and by gender.

"Unfortunately, we still see a higher number of drivers under 25 involved in moving traffic offences as well as driving while impaired through drugs as compared with the proportion of drivers in that age grouping," Mr. McCormick pointed out. "Fourteen female drivers have shown positive or refused to take a breath test where there was no collision involved."

"On a regional basis, the urban – rural figures remained proportionate to the number of drivers in each part of the country," Mr. McCormick said. "And, we would like to remind motorists that as part of the two-week Summer Drink/Drugs Driving campaign, police officers throughout Scotland are being instructed to breath test not only drivers who are involved in road traffic accidents, and drivers who are suspected of being under the influence of alcohol, but also drivers stopped in relation to a moving traffic offence."

Only one driver was stopped during the first week of the two-week campaign (ending July 29) and charged with being impaired from drink but a total of eight drivers (seven male, one female) were charged with being impaired through drugs, according to ACPOS figures.

While Scotland's chief police officers are pleased to see the drop in the figures in two categories, they are not happy with the 20 per cent rise in positive or refusals to take breath tests where there were no collisions.

"Police forces around the country will continue – every day of the year – to ensure that roads are as safe as can be and that motorists who drink and drive or take any form of drug that can affect their driving ability will face the full brunt of the law," Mr. McCormick concluded.

The message from the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland and eight police forces is simple when it comes to drink driving or drug driving: "Don't risk it!"

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