



ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS IN SCOTLAND

NEWS RELEASE

Sunday, 7 December 2008

Embargoed until 00:01 on Monday, 8 December

DON'T DRIVE "THE MORNING AFTER" WARNS POLICE CHIEF

DRIVERS who get behind the wheel "the morning after the night before" are to be targeted by Scotland's police forces in the latest campaign against drink and drug driving.

For the duration of the crackdown, police officers will pay particular attention to those driving in the earlier part of the day who may still have drugs or excess alcohol in their system.

Chief Constable Kevin Smith (Central Scotland Police), the new Chair of the Road Policing Business Area for the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS), said: "We will also be keeping a close eye on the roads at all other times and every police officer will be on high alert to detect drink drivers. Drink driving is totally unacceptable and I would urge people to let us know directly or via Crimestoppers if they suspect someone of driving over the limit.

"The evidence is overwhelming that there is a link between drink driving and serious road crashes. Drivers who flout the law are not only putting their own lives at risk but the lives of others who may be family or friends or even perfect strangers. The message is clear from the police in Scotland - you may cause a crash, you will be detected, don't risk it."

As the festive season approaches, Scotland's eight police forces are gearing up to launch their annual, four-week-long Festive Drink-Drug Driving Safety Campaign in conjunction with ACPOS, the Scottish Government and its road safety arm, Road Safety Scotland. The campaign kicks off at noon on Monday, 8 December with a launch at the Scottish Parliament and will run until 7am on Monday, 5 January 2009.

ACPOS is fully supportive of a reduction in the drink drive limit from 80mg/100ml of blood to 50mg/100ml.

Chief Constable Smith added: "Not only is the Scottish Government supportive of this move but also the British Medical Association is backing it.

"Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom are among a small group of European nations that have still not lowered the blood alcohol count. Too many motorists are ignoring the law and continue to drive after drinking. We need to look at lowering the limit to tackle one of the major reasons for loss of life on our roads."

Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill said: "Drink driving continues to be a major cause of deaths and injuries on Scotland's roads, especially over the festive period.

The annual ACPOS campaign is an important weapon in the fight against those drivers who still think that it is acceptable to drink and drive.

“Anyone considering risking drinking and driving over the Christmas and New Year period should be under no illusion that the police will be out in force on our roads and if caught they could lose their licence. Even the morning after the night before, you can still be over the limit.

“The Scottish Government believes that the drink driving limit should be reduced from 80 mg to 50 mg per 100 ml of blood to save lives on our roads and we will continue to press the UK Government to reduce the limit.”

Michael McDonnell, Director of Road Safety Scotland, said: “It's hard to believe that over 40 years after the introduction of the breathalyser there is still an unacceptable number of drivers prepared to take the risk. Drink-drivers are responsible for almost 1000 deaths or injuries every year, and the police and good intelligence for the police probably prevents many more.

“Getting caught also has catastrophic consequences which will result in loss of licence and a lengthy criminal record, which will affect almost every aspect of your life. It's not worth it, so don't risk it.”

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For further information on the launch and the campaign, contact:
David Steele, Communications Manager, ACPOS Communications
on 0141 435 1240 or 07771 842 881 out-of-hours.

Notes to Editors:

- Any driver involved in a collision, even if caused by another driver, will be breath-tested. In addition, any driver stopped for committing a moving traffic offence can also be required to provide a breath sample.
- Legislation empowers the police to require suspected drug drivers to undertake roadside impairment tests in order to ascertain their fitness to drive. It is now an offence to refuse to take part.
- Crimestoppers anticipate calls from the public to double during the festive period when a percentage of Crimestoppers calls relate to drink or drug driving. The Crimestoppers number is 0800 555 111 and the anonymity of the caller will be maintained.
- Figures will be collated and released along with incidents of note on a weekly basis by ACPOS.