



EMBARGOED UNTIL 1130hrs ON 7 DECEMBER, 2009

NEWS RELEASE

ACPOS FESTIVE DRINK DRUG-DRIVING CAMPAIGN

LAW enforcement agencies across Scotland are to get tougher with drink drivers this festive season and offenders face losing their cars as well as losing their licences.

The campaign will be launched at 11.30am on Monday 7 December at the Scottish Parliament by Kevin Smith, Chief Constable of Central Scotland Police and Chair of the ACPOS Road Policing Business Area, Kenny MacAskill, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, and the Lord Advocate, the Right Honourable Elish Angiolini QC.

This year the campaign aims to highlight the risks and consequences of drink-driving, and the message that Scotland has just got tougher on drink-driving. Drivers caught drink-driving over this year's festive campaign will face tougher consequences. New enforcement in Scotland means drivers caught drink-driving for a second time can have their vehicle taken away for good. Authorities have the power to seize and enforce forfeiture of the driver's vehicle under the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.

Kevin Smith Chief Constable of Central Scotland Police and Chair of the ACPOS Road Policing Business Area said, "Throughout the year, police officers across Scotland arrest thousands of drink drivers. Despite our warnings that we will target such individuals 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, they still risk wrecking not only the lives of others but also their own and those of their families, due to the severe consequences of being caught. This year there will be an added risk in that motorists caught drink-driving now risk losing their car as well."

"Anything that can result in fewer drivers risking drink-driving must be considered. Research shows that around one in nine deaths on Scottish roads involve drivers who are over the legal limit."

He added: "This new initiative comes as we launch our Festive campaign against those who choose to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It is an excellent example of how we can work closely with our colleagues in the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal service to do everything at our disposal to deter such behaviour. The message is clear, don't risk it"

The Lord Advocate, the Right Honourable Elish Angiolini QC said: "As prosecutors we know from bitter experience the misery that drink-driving can cause. It often results in serious injury or loss of life bringing devastation to families and loved ones. Over 10% of deaths on Scottish Roads involve drivers who are over the legal limit. Recent figures have shown that over the last two years the numbers of those caught drink driving throughout the festive period have been falling, but there are still too many with a number of those being repeat offenders despite the strong deterrents already in place.

“This year as part of the Festive Drink Driving Campaign there is the added deterrent that they may well lose their cars as prosecutors will seek their forfeiture in the courts.

“The public can be assured that the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service give road safety a high priority and by working with colleagues in ACPOS, Scottish Government and Court service we will ensure these offences are investigated thoroughly and offenders are prosecuted and brought to justice. To those drivers out there considering drink driving, be warned that, as well as your licence, you might lose your car.”

Kenny MacAskill, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, said: “Road fatalities are at their lowest level in nearly 60 years, but the sad reality is that far too many people are still dying on Scotland’s roads each year. It is absolutely intolerable that there are still individuals out there taking a gamble on other people’s lives, individuals who still insist on getting behind the wheel of a vehicle whilst under the influence of alcohol. “I hope that this will be a wake up call and today the message is loud and clear – whether it is a prison sentence, taking your license, or taking your car - you will be caught and you will be punished.

“Effective deterrents like this are vital in our efforts, and backed by the ambitious initiatives outlined in Scotland’s Road Safety Framework, we are doing everything in our power to save more lives. We are also continuing to press the UK Government for Scotland to be given even more powers now – powers which would allow us to change the current legislation and to reduce the drink drive limit to 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood with random roadside tests. Working together with road safety partners across the country we are determined to make Scotland’s roads safer for all.”

NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS:

The ACPOS Festive Drink/Drug-Driving Campaign will commence at 0700 hours on Monday 7 December 2009 and end at 0700 hours on Monday 4 January 2010

1 in 9 deaths in Scottish roads involve drivers who are over the legal limit.¹

25% of Scots do not know how much alcohol will put them over the limit²

During the 2008 festive campaign 654 drivers were arrested for drink/ drug driving.

In 2007 the figure was 839, in 2006 the figure was 908, and in 2005 the figure was 808

Driving or attempting to drive whilst above the legal alcohol limit will result in:–

- Loss of licence – an automatic 12 month driving ban
- A risk of being fined up to £5,000
- A criminal record – for a minimum of 20 years
- An offence which stays on your licence for 11 years
- And can now result in seizure and forfeiture of the vehicle

The likelihood of being caught is now greater than ever before. There is a presumption to breathalyse any driver who:

- has been stopped for any moving traffic offence
- is suspected of having been drinking
- has been involved in an accident

For further information please contact ACPOS Communications on 0141 435 1240 or 07771 842881

¹ <http://www.dontriskit.info/andthelaw.html>

² <http://www.dontriskit.info/>