

Police put out seasonal warning over drinking and driving



Police in Scotland are giving their clearest 'Don't Drink and Drive' message yet this festive season and pledging to use every means at their disposal to track down those who fail to heed the warnings.

The basic message from the country's senior officers is that while they support any plan to reduce the drink drive limit those who plan to get behind the wheel should not drink any alcohol.

The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) is backing a four week campaign starting today which will target those who drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Across Scotland officers in marked and unmarked vehicles will be on the lookout for offenders as will all officers who are on patrol in their own local areas. Information and intelligence will be gathered on possible trouble spots and potential drink or drug drivers.

Police are urging the public to help end the scourge of drink and drug driving by reporting suspected offenders to the police or to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

The Scottish Government and Road Safety Scotland (part of Transport Scotland) are supporting ACPOS annual festive drink and drug drive campaign. A television and radio advertising campaign is being aired from 3 December to emphasise the consequences of drink driving by underlining the message that

“if you choose to drink and drive, you choose to lose your licence”.

Deputy Chief Constable Tom Ewing from Fife Constabulary, who speaks on road policing matters for ACPoS, said: “Throughout my career I have found it astonishing that people are prepared to risk not only the serious consequences of losing their licence but also the threat to life and limb by taking to the wheel under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Last year we saw 7445 people charged with being over the limit which is a simply unacceptable figure.

“We will use every means at our disposal to track down those who drive after taking alcohol or drugs and with our law enforcement partners will ensure that they face the consequences. That is likely to mean a fine, loss of driving licence for at least a year and for repeat offenders and those who give a high reading the chance of losing their vehicle.

“Many serious crashes happen as a result of drivers drinking or taking drugs and as many as one in nine road deaths is related to a drink or drug driver. That is simply not acceptable and we must work together to end the scourge of drink and drug driving. ACPoS fully supports the idea of reducing the limit for drink driving which has been the subject of recent consultation but would stress that our clear advice remains that no alcohol or drugs should be taken before driving a vehicle.”

Kenny MacAskill, Cabinet Secretary for Justice added: “If you choose to drink and drive, you choose to lose your licence. But the consequences can be devastating for victims, their families and our communities. On average, an estimated 30 lives are lost on our roads every year due to drink driving.

“The Scottish Government and Road Safety Scotland are supporting the ACPoS annual festive drink and drug drive crackdown with an advertising campaign to remind people of the

dangers and the consequences.

“This Government has made it clear that we want a lower drink driving limit as we believe it will help make Scotland’s roads safer. Our consultation, that sought views on reducing the drink driving limit to a level which would bring Scotland into line with most of Europe and which will help save lives on our roads, closed last week. Consultation responses will be independently analysed and we will publish our consultation report early next year. We will continue to work with the police and road safety partners to consider new measures to tackle the scourge of drink driving on Scotland’s roads.”

The Lord Advocate, the Right Honourable Frank Mulholland QC said:

“As the festive season comes around again parties and celebrations will be commonplace. Across Scotland many people will be enjoying time with their families, catching up with old friends and making new ones.

“For some though it may well be a tragic and upsetting time, their lives devastated as family die needlessly because selfish drivers get behind the wheel while under the influence.

“One in nine deaths on the road is as a result of a drink or drug driver which is totally unacceptable.

“While we would encourage all involved to enjoy themselves we urge them to act responsibly and not spoil their celebrations, or those of others, by driving under the influence. The message is simple; if you are driving do not drink and do not take drugs.”