

New drink drive limit appears to be working

It appears that new figures made available today show that the public is getting the message about not drinking and driving on Scotland's roads.

The new lower drink drive limit of 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood came into force on 5 December 2014, bringing Scotland into line with much of the rest of Europe.

During a four week festive Drink Drive campaign from Road Safety Scotland (part of Transport Scotland) and the Scottish Government, Police Scotland tested 17,504 drivers for alcohol – an average of 625 drivers each day. A total of 351 drivers were caught under the influence this year compared to 434 in the same period last year – a 19 per cent reduction.

Police detected one drink driver for every 50 (351 from 17,504) tests carried out compared to one drink driver for every 47 (434 from 20,646) tests carried out in the same campaign period last year. Those caught now face the New Year without a licence, a minimum 20-year criminal record and a fine

Of those caught drink driving, 20 drivers were detected between the new 50mg limit and the previous limit of 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood.

And during the period a total of 27 drivers were detected between 0600 and 1000 hours, six of whom were between the old and the new limit.

Cabinet Secretary for Justice Michael Matheson, said: "These latest statistics show a 19 per cent decrease in the number of drink drive detections over the festive period, and are testament to the immediate effect that the new lower limit has

helped to make our roads safer.

“Scotland is leading the way across the UK with the introduction of a lower drink drive limit, which has backing from experts, road safety campaigners and the majority of the public north and south of the border, as well as bringing Scotland into line with almost every other country in Europe.

“We will continue in our efforts to change driver behaviour in order to make our roads safer, and our advice for the year ahead is simple – drink driving is completely unacceptable and puts lives at risk, therefore the best approach is to avoid alcohol altogether if you intend to get behind the wheel.”

With the Christmas and New Year festivities now over, motorists are being reminded that the message not to drink any alcohol at all before driving and to plan journeys the next morning, remains relevant all year round.

Assistant Chief Constable Bernard Higgins of Police Scotland, said: “The initial campaign may be over, but our work continues and the message remains the same – don’t risk it, don’t take any alcohol before you get behind the wheel and it will help you help us keep people safe.

“The new limit is proving a good deterrent in stopping people from drinking and driving, but it is still unacceptable that 351 people chose to ignore all the advice and warnings and get behind the wheel after consuming alcohol. They are not just risking their lives but also those of other road users and pedestrians.

“Make it your New Year’s resolution to never drink and drive and help us keep Scotland’s roads safe.”

The introduction of the new lower limit was supported by a public awareness campaign ahead of the legislation taking effect. This was followed by a high profile social marketing campaign over the festive period across TV, radio, video-on-

demand, digital, PR, field activity and partnership working.

The campaign urged members of the public not to drink and drive and advised festive revellers to plan ahead when it came to their travel home from a night out and any journeys in the morning.

The campaign also sought to remind drivers of the tough legal and personal consequences of a drink drive conviction, which include a loss of licence with an automatic 12 month driving ban and a minimum 20 year criminal record.

Although the festive period is now over, Police vigilance will remain at the same level throughout 2015 and the same consequences apply if motorists chose to drink and drive.

Find out more by visiting www.donriskit.info or the Road Safety Scotland Facebook page or follow @RoadSafetyScot on Twitter.