



Milwaukee County Office of the Sheriff

Kim Brooks
Chief Public Information Officer
Phone: 414-278-5015
Fax: 414-223-1852
kbrooks@milwcnty.com

NEWS RELEASE

David A. Clarke Jr.
Sheriff

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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A Thanksgiving Message From Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke

Around the holidays, the American Automobile Association surveys the public. They recently announced the results of that survey. Triple A estimates that 38.3 million Americans nationwide will travel 50 miles or more from home to celebrate Thanksgiving. 31.7 million travelers will drive. With the increase in traffic, sheriff's deputies will be presented with additional highway concerns during this holiday season and we will respond with a freeway initiative designed to **first**, improve traffic flow, **second** prevent crashes and **most importantly** prevent crashes that cause injuries and fatalities.

Our plan deploys sheriff squads and deputies on Milwaukee County freeways .

The initiative will continue through Jan 1, 2008. At designated times, throughout this holiday initiative there will be additional deputies patrolling I-94, I-43, U.S.45 and 145. I-894, and I-794 and more will be deployed based on changing conditions. We have researched the data available to us and have isolated some of the major contributing factors to all crashes, and more specifically those that cause injuries and fatalities.

1. **Excessive Speed**
2. **Drunk Driving**
3. **Failure to wear seat belts and this includes placing children in approved child seat carrier.**

For more information about the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office,
visit our website at www.mksheriff.org.

Seatbelt Safety

The State of Wisconsin has **only a 66% seat belt usage**-one of the **lowest in the nation**. We all pay **higher health care and insurance costs** because of unbelted drivers. Hospital costs for an unbelted driver are **50% higher** than for those who wear seat belts. The chance of surviving a crash at high speed is increased **by 60%** if wearing a seat belt. With this kind of information, why would anyone risk not wearing a safety belt?

Speed:

Driving, especially at high speed requires focus and attention. Ask any NASCAR or Indy race car driver.

Crash data shows that there is too much going on inside of people's cars for the type of focus required for safe driving. The insides of people's cars have been transformed into mobile offices, dining rooms and even entertainment centers. In this type of environment how can the average driver possibly focus on driving?

There has become too much reliance on safety features resulting in a false sense of security about a cars ability to keep drivers alive when involved in a crash. Anti-lock brakes and air bags reduce injuries and death not eliminate them.

Drunken Driving:

This continues to be our number one priority. There is zero tolerance for drunken drivers.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the upcoming holiday season can be the most dangerous time of year on the road.

Tired Driving

According to a November 26th New York Times article, 20 percent of accidents nation-wide are related to driver fatigue. Drivers who are sleepy or fatigued demonstrate the same impaired judgement and decreased reaction times as drunk drivers. When you begin to feel tired at the wheel, take a break from your driving to wake yourself up. Better yet, make sure you are well-rested before traveling long distances.

Move Over Law:

Finally, I want to encourage you to look out for law enforcement officers who are stopped on the road. In Wisconsin, we have a “*Move Over*” law. The law requires drivers to move over at least one lane when passing a stopped emergency vehicle or tow truck . If it is not safe to move over, drivers must slow down.

The “*Move Over*” law is designed to protect law enforcement officers and others who must routinely work on the side of the road. Historically, most officers killed in traffic-related deaths are struck while making a traffic stop or while they are inside of their squads on duty. Drivers can be fined \$243.00 and assessed three points for this violation.

This public announcement of serves as the warning to all motorists. I have ordered strict enforcement of the previously mentioned roadway violations. Again, our goal is to prevent crashes, specifically those that cause injuries, fatalities and freeway lane closures.

Please be safe and Happy Thanksgiving.

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