



State of Illinois
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Illinois to Experience Sixth Straight Year with Fewer than 1,000 Motor Vehicle Fatalities

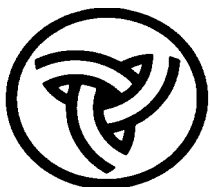
Motorists Should Expect Increased Enforcement; Police to Crack Down on Drunk and Unbuckled Drivers for New Year's Holiday

CHICAGO – As 2014 comes to an end, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Illinois State Police (ISP) and hundreds of local law enforcement agencies across the state are counting down to 2015 by working overtime during the New Year's holiday and into the new year. The increased traffic enforcement is an all-out effort to help ensure Illinois has zero motor vehicle fatalities during New Year's, keep Illinois motor vehicle fatalities on the decline in 2014 and get 2015 off to a good, safe start.

In 2009 in Illinois, 911 people lost their lives in motor vehicle crashes. This was the first year since 1921 that Illinois motor vehicle fatalities were below 1,000, and the second-lowest fatalities since 1922 when the total was 1,003. Since 2009, Illinois has seen five straight years under 1,000 with 2014 in line to be the sixth. In fact, there is a chance 2014 fatalities could rival 2009 fatalities, the modern day low. Preliminary numbers through December 30, 2014 show 907 people have died in crashes thus far in 2014.

To help prevent additional fatalities, hundreds of additional law enforcement hours funded with federal funds through IDOT will provide roadside safety checks, seat belt enforcement zones and other patrols reminding motorists to "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" and "Click It or Ticket." This statewide effort began before Thanksgiving and will ramp up on New Year's Eve and continue strong through January 1, 2015 to help counteract what can tragically be one of the most dangerous times on Illinois roads.

IDOT crash data shows in the last five years (2009-2013) during the New Year's holiday (depending on day of week on which December 31 falls, New Year's timeframe ranges from 1.25 days to 4.25 days), 35 people died in motor vehicle crashes on Illinois public roadways.



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Fifteen, or 43 percent, of those 35 individuals died in crashes involving at least one driver who had been drinking. During the same five-year timeframe on New Year's, 2,477 people were injured.

During the 2013 New Year's holiday, seven people lost their lives and 263 were injured in motor vehicle crashes on Illinois public roadways. Three of the seven fatalities resulted from crashes involving at least one drinking driver.

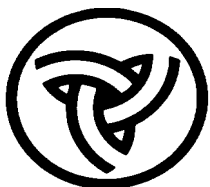
IDOT and law enforcement recommend designating a sober driver and not letting friends and family members drive drunk. These are just two of several simple steps to avoid a tragic crash or an arrest for drunk driving. Other important tips include:

- Plan ahead. Designate a sober driver before going out and give that person your keys.
- If you've been drinking, call a taxi, use mass transit or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely.
- Use your community's designated driver program.
- Promptly report to law enforcement drunk drivers you see on the roadways.
- Wear your seat belt and make sure all passengers are safely buckled up. It is your best defense against a drunk driver.

See the latest episode of IDOT's "Driving Dead Series" at www.TheDrivingDeadSeries.com, and check us out on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for up-to-date news and behind-the-scenes footage of the series.

To view a preliminary daily snapshot of Illinois crash data for 2014, visit <http://apps.dot.illinois.gov/FatalCrash/Home/CrashData>.

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