

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF  
FAIRFIELD COUNTY

Dave Phalen, Sheriff

PRESS RELEASE

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SAFE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE- Don't Let the Holidays End Tragically..."Buzzed Driving IS Drunk Driving"

[Lancaster, Ohio, November 30, 2012] As the Christmas Season draws near, one of the best wishes to add to your list is the safety of friends and family. As motor vehicles increase on our local roadways for shopping and Pre-Holiday events, drivers need to remember that driving impaired is just not worth the risk. Safe Communities of Fairfield County wants drivers to remember that "Buzzed Driving IS Drunk Driving." Planning ahead is one of the best gifts to give when planning a party or special event to mark the occasion.

"During Christmas we often see an increase in crashes on our roadways," noted Teresa C. Carper, Director for the Safe Communities Program. "Unfortunately, we often forget that 'Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk,' and the happiest season of all can end tragically."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 32,885 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2010. Thirty-one percent of those fatalities involved a driver that was alcohol impaired...a total of 10,228 people. For the month of December 2010, 775 families nationwide lost a loved one to alcohol impaired driving. The number of people killed per day from this act averaged at 25.

"Drinking and Driving is NEVER a good combination," noted Fairfield County Sheriff Dave Phalen. "Driving a motor vehicle impaired jeopardizes your life and the lives of others. If you choose to drink, designate a driver or call for a ride home...it IS the best gift you can give to those who care about you."

The Sheriff's Office will have extra patrols out on local roadways thanks to their High Visibility Enforcement Overtime grant. Drivers should remember that if you drive impaired, someone is watching. "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" may be a slogan you hear throughout the year, but getting pulled over can be a costly experience. The loss of time at work, the loss of your license, attorney and court fees, should not be a part of your Christmas Wish List.

Sheriff Phalen and the Safe Communities Program also reminds drivers to "Buckle Up Every Trip Every Time," watch posted speed limits, and to not drive distracted. For more information on planning a safe Christmas party, and driving safe this Christmas Season, visit the National Highway Traffic Administration website at [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov).

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