



KAY IVEY
GOVERNOR

ALABAMA LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

201 SOUTH UNION STREET, SUITE 300 | P.O. BOX 304115 | MONTGOMERY, AL 36130-4115
PHONE 334.676.6000 | WWW.ALEA.GOV



HAL TAYLOR
SECRETARY

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ALEA Kicks Off ‘Twelve Days of Safety’ *Campaign to Run Throughout the Holiday Season*

MONTGOMERY – As the festive holiday season continues, families are preparing and finalizing plans for Christmas gatherings and New Year’s celebrations. Much like the Thanksgiving travel period, Troopers with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) expect to see travel numbers return to pre-pandemic levels as more citizens prepare to visit friends and loved ones this year. Unfortunately, congested roadways mixed with dangerous driving behaviors can lead to tragic motor vehicle crashes.

“This year, we want to reiterate safety before, during and after peak travel times to encourage citizens to continuously keep safety at the forefront of their holiday plans,” ALEA Secretary Hal Taylor said. “Each year, our mission is to save lives by preventing deadly crashes, especially during popular travel periods. Our Highway Patrol Division does an outstanding job of developing and executing holiday enforcement plans to deter dangerous driving behaviors for all major holidays; however, this year we have also developed a very specific and deliberate public messaging plan to spotlight key safety tips and reminders for the next 12 days, leading through New Year’s Day.”

This year’s official holiday travel period will be from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Dec. 24, to midnight Saturday, Jan. 1, 2022, but the Agency will share important roadway safety tips, traffic law reminders and other pertinent information on a variety of public platforms beginning Tuesday, Dec. 21. Additionally, during the official travel period, ALEA Troopers will conduct a variety of enforcement activities, including driver license and equipment check points, to curb such deadly behaviors as driving under the influence, driving while distracted, not buckling up, speeding and following too closely. In addition, the Agency is participating in the national Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign, designed to curb alcohol- and drug-impaired driving.

To kick off ALEA’s Twelve Days of Safety, the Agency offers the following safety tips to keep in mind:

1. **Know Before you Go.** Plan your route ahead of time and leave early to anticipate pit stops or traffic delays. Make sure your vehicle has been serviced and ready to hit the road.
2. **Drive defensively, as holiday travel may present additional challenges.**
3. **Don’t drive while distracted.** Do not allow such distractions as using your cell phone to text, email, or access social media take your focus off driving. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for at least five seconds. At 55 miles per hour, that is like driving the length of an entire football with your eyes closed. Safe driving requires your full attention.

4. **If you must pull over on a busy roadway, do so safely.** If you have vehicle difficulties while on the road (e.g., a flat tire), turn on your hazard lights and pull over to a safe location off the road. Before exiting the vehicle and taking any action, ensure you can safely move around outside the car.
5. **Drinking and driving over the holidays don't mix.** If you're planning on enjoying some eggnog or other festive alcoholic beverage, please help us protect everyone and do not drink and drive. Make plans to stay with a friend or family member or use public transport such as a taxi or ride share service.
6. **Be vigilant for pedestrians.** Look for pedestrians everywhere. They may not be walking where they should be or may be hard to see – especially in poorly lit conditions, including dusk/dawn hours, at night and in inclement weather, including fog.
7. **Pedestrians should also remain vigilant.** Walk on a sidewalk or path when one is available. Otherwise, walk on the shoulder – facing traffic. Be cautious night and day when sharing the roadway with vehicles. Never assume the driver sees you. Do not walk when under the influence of alcohol or drugs, which impair your judgment and coordination.
8. **Make sure your children are properly buckled or restrained.** Children should be in age- and size-appropriate car seats, booster seats, and seat belts, which reduce the risk of serious injuries or death in a car crash by up to 80 percent. Children are safest when car seats and booster seats are used correctly. Buckle children the right way in the right seat and learn how to avoid the most common mistakes.
9. **Make sure all occupants within your vehicle are buckled, no matter how short the trip.** Alabama's seat belt/child restraint law requires ALL passengers – no matter how old or which seat they are occupying – to buckle up.
10. **On multi-lane roadways, use the left lane for passing only.** Not only is it courteous driving and avoids impeding traffic, but Alabama law also requires slower traffic to keep to the right and to only use the left lane for passing (when posted). Motorists may drive for up to a mile and half in the left lane.
11. **Move over and help keep the roadways safe for all.** When approaching emergency or tow vehicles, remember Alabama's Move Over Law requires motorists to move over or slow down to 15 mph or less than the posted speed limit if you are unable to change lanes.
12. **Monitor weather and road conditions wherever you are traveling.** For road conditions/closings in Alabama, visit www.alea.gov/weather-advisories.