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ALEA Dishes Out Safety Tips for Thanksgiving 2023

MONTGOMERY – Thanksgiving marks one of the busiest weeks of the year on Alabama roadways. This year, the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) urges everyone to prepare to share the road with millions of other motorists as AAA predicts more than 49 million Americans will be driving during the upcoming holiday.

“There is nothing better than making memories with family and friends during this extended holiday weekend, even if it means driving for hours and traveling long distances,” ALEA Secretary Hal Taylor said. “We encourage everyone to make sure your vehicle is travel ready, leave early to allow for heavy traffic, buckle up and never drive impaired. Your welfare and the safety of others this season starts with an individual commitment to responsible actions.”

This year’s holiday travel period begins at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 22, and ends at midnight Sunday, Nov. 26. All available Troopers within ALEA’s Highway Patrol Division will conduct additional enforcement details to ensure Alabama roadways are as safe as possible and prevent traffic crashes, injuries and fatalities. As always, motorists will play a key role in traffic safety and should obey speed limits, make sure everyone in the vehicle is properly buckled up and avoid texting and other distractions while driving. With a chance of rain and storms in the forecast for some parts of the state, holiday travelers can also check roadway conditions and live video feed from [ALGO](#) before leaving the house.

Colonel Jonathan Archer, Director of ALEA’s Department of Public Safety, said, “As law enforcement officers, ALEA Troopers face a multitude of challenges as part of their job but notifying the loved ones of those killed in traffic crashes is truly one of the most dreaded responsibilities they have. We ask those traveling on Alabama roadways to make traffic safety a top priority and remember that you are the best gift you can give your family this holiday season.”

According to data compiled by the Center for Advanced Public Safety (CAPS) in Alabama, 65 lives have been tragically lost during previous extended Thanksgiving travel periods from 2018 to 2022. Since 2019, CAPS has recorded an overall decline in traffic-related injuries and deaths, however, ALEA needs everyone’s assistance to ensure that trend continues.

ALEA Troopers offer the following traffic safety tips for this Thanksgiving holiday:

Take breaks and rotate drivers during long trips. If you feel fatigued, pull over and stretch your legs, get something to eat or drink and make sure you are ready to continue your trip before getting back behind the wheel. Drive defensively, as holiday travel may present additional challenges and never drive drowsy.

Use seatbelts and proper child restraints. Alabama's seat belt/child restraint law requires ALL passengers – no matter how old or which seat they are occupying – to be buckled up no matter how short the trip. Whether you are going across the state or just around the corner, buckle up.

Remember Alabama's Move Over Law. When approaching emergency or tow vehicles along all roadways, motorists must move over or slow down at least 15 mph below the posted speed limit if they are not able to change lanes.

Keep 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 before moving back into the right lane.

Eliminate distractions while driving. Distractions include texting, utilizing a cell phone or smartphone, talking to passengers, watching videos, playing mobile games, adjusting the radio, navigation system or other devices. Distractions endanger drivers, passengers and bystanders. Alabama law prohibits texting while driving as well as searching the Internet on a mobile device while operating a motor vehicle. In case of emergency, pull off the roadway in a safe location prior to placing a call.

You are the best gift you can give your family this holiday season. Practice safe driving habits and never drink and drive. Make alternate travel plans if you are consuming alcohol. Individuals younger than age 21 are prohibited from consuming alcohol, and it is illegal for anyone to have an open bottle of alcohol in a vehicle. To ensure teens and older children do not consume alcoholic beverages at various festivities, parents and other adults should closely monitor the situation.

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