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Let Safety Ring and Celebrate America Responsibly this Fourth of July

MONTGOMERY – As millions of American citizens prepare to celebrate the birth of our country with both friends and family, the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) will be working overtime to ensure Alabama’s roadways and waterways are safe for everyone.

“Each year our Agency conducts a multitude of safety initiatives and high-visibility details to protect and serve all who live in or visit the great state of Alabama,” ALEA Secretary Hal Taylor said. “Sadly, each year lives are lost across the state and the nation as a result of driving or operating a vessel while impaired. This Independence Day, safeguard your freedom, and the lives of others, by committing to drink responsibly and only drive or operate a vessel if sober.”

According to data released from the National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA) 1,460 drivers lost their lives in motor vehicle traffic crashes over the Fourth of July holiday period from 2017 to 2021. Thirty-eight percent (552) of the drivers killed during those years were alcohol-impaired, with a blood alcohol concentration of .08 or higher, and nearly half (44%) of the drivers killed were ages 21-34.

Data recorded by the Center for Advanced Public Safety (CAPS) in Alabama shows 67 traffic crashes, resulting in 35 injuries and four fatalities, occurred in the state due to driving while under the influence over the Fourth of July travel period in 2022. So far in 2023, there have been 2,098 traffic crashes related to driving while under the influence, resulting in 71 fatalities, according to CAPS data.

ALEA Department of Public Safety Director, Colonel Jon Archer said, “The reason we share this data is to reiterate the severity of driving or operating a vessel while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. There were four families that lost loved ones last Fourth of July and their lives will never be the same. Please do not drive or operate a vessel while impaired. There are a variety of options to assist impaired drivers get home safely, such as designating a sober driver, calling a taxi or using a rideshare. ALEA Troopers will have zero tolerance for drivers or vessel operators that are impaired, so regardless, if an individual is on the roadway or waterway if found impaired, they will be arrested.”

This year, Independence Day falls on a Tuesday, which means the official holiday travel period will run five days instead of four and will begin at 12 a.m. on Friday, June 30, and end at 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, July 4.

Like in previous years, all available Troopers within ALEA’s Highway Patrol and Marine Patrol Divisions will be patrolling on the state’s roadways and waterways. Highway Patrol’s operation will highlight the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over national campaign and consists of informative media day events, line patrol and saturation details along with driver license checkpoints, as well as Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) details, which will be conducted in various locations across the entire state. ALEA’s Marine Patrol will participate Operation Dry Water, which is a national year-round boating

under the influence awareness and enforcement campaign. ALEA Troopers will join the U.S. Coast Guard, Alabama Department of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and other county and municipal agencies in targeting Boating Under the Influence offenses by utilizing safety check points, saturation law enforcement patrols, vessel inspections and increased night patrols looking for violations that may indicate the presence of an impaired operator.

“While we want everyone to have a fun and relaxing holiday, we also want to remind everyone of the dangers of what we call ‘boater’s fatigue,’ as extreme heat is forecasted in the upcoming days. This is a phenomenon caused by the combination of sun, wind, noise, vibration and the movement of the boat, which can impair judgment and risk the safety of your passengers and other boaters. This effect is intensified when consuming alcohol,” Colonel Archer continued.

Additionally, the Agency’s Aviation Unit will partner with Gulf Shores and Orange Beach for the second year in a row to conduct a Summer Rescue Swimmer Detail over the upcoming holiday weekend. ALEA will provide an aircraft and pilot to quickly fly and deploy rescue swimmers from both Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Fire Departments to distressed swimmers. The aircraft will also be utilized to conduct beach safety flights, patrolling in those areas where lifeguards are not available. The Agency strongly encourages all citizens and visitors to check daily beach conditions and the status of warning flags when traveling to enjoy the beach. More information regarding beach and rip current safety can be found within ALEA’s safety tips.

Whether you are traveling on Alabama’s roadways or enjoying the state’s scenic waterways and gulf coast, the Agency has plenty of safety reminders to keep handy for a fun and safe holiday weekend for all at: [ALEA’s Summer of Safety Playbook](#).

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