



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



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STATE POLICE

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Wolf Administration Highlights Holiday Travel Safety

Motorists are Encouraged to “Know Before You Go” by Checking 511PA Before Holiday Travel

Harrisburg, PA – With the busy holiday travel period just around the corner, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC), Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) came together outside of PTC’s headquarters in Harrisburg to remind drivers of the importance of safe driving and consistent seat belt use.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike expects Thanksgiving to be the busiest travel holiday of the year with 3.15 million motorists traveling during the six-day period starting today and ending on Sunday. The periods of heaviest traffic will be 3:00 to 8:00 PM on Tuesday, November 23 and Wednesday, November 24. Thanksgiving Day is when traffic will be at its lightest. Overall, holiday traffic is up 39 percent over the same travel period last year; however, traffic is still down 9 percent from 2019 holiday traffic volumes prior to the pandemic.

“With traffic returning to heavier volumes and travelers happily focused on holiday visiting, it’s critical to keep safety top of mind while driving to your destination,” said PA Turnpike Chief Operating Officer Craig Shuey. “In addition to these significantly higher traffic volumes, motorists are decidedly more distracted as they return to the roadway and will need to be more vigilant for traffic incidents. Be prepared for volume related slowdowns, disabled vehicles, and other roadway obstructions. Also, please remember to slow down and move over for vehicles on the shoulder such as law enforcement, turnpike first responders, and fire and EMS personnel. Give yourself plenty of extra time to arrive at your destination. Be patient and share the road with all who are travelling this holiday weekend.”

Operation Safe Holiday kicked off on November 15 with the “Click It or Ticket” Thanksgiving enforcement mobilization which runs through November 28. During the effort, PSP will offer no-cost [child passenger safety seat fitting clinics](#) at several locations statewide, with the goal of keeping Pennsylvania’s youngest travelers safe on the road.

"This no-cost resource is designed to protect our youngest passengers during a busy time of the year for travel," said Deputy Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police Lieutenant Colonel Scott Price. "Troopers are trained to look for a variety of traffic violations and will remain cognizant during the holiday periods. Travelers can do their part by remembering to slow down, move over, never drive impaired or distracted, and always buckle up."

Pennsylvania law requires any occupant younger than 18 to buckle up when riding in a vehicle, as well as drivers and front-seat passengers. Children under the age of two must be secured in a rear-facing car seat, and children under the age of four must be restrained in an approved child safety seat. Children must ride in a booster seat until their eighth birthday.

Throughout Operation Safe Holiday, law enforcement will also conduct sobriety checkpoints, roving patrols, and regular traffic safety patrols beginning the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, November 24, through the New Year's holiday to crack down on drivers impaired by drugs or alcohol.

According to PennDOT data, during the 2020 holiday travel period beginning the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and running through January 2, 2021, there were 1,000 impaired driving crashes, resulting in 26 fatalities.

“Working together, we can all do our part to prevent crashes and fatalities on Pennsylvania roadways,” said PennDOT Acting Executive Deputy Secretary Melissa Batula. “We want everyone to arrive safely this holiday travel season, so please designate a sober driver and always wear your seat belt.

When crashes do happen, PennDOT, PTC, and first responders work together to quickly help motorists involved and keep traffic moving. [Pennsylvania's Move Over Law](#) requires drivers to move over or slow down for all responders, including police, fire, and ambulance crews, as well as stopped tow trucks and maintenance vehicles. The Move Over Law also mandates drivers change lanes or slow down when approaching disabled vehicles when at least two emergency displays, such as vehicle hazard lamps, road flares, and/or cones or caution signs are present.

PennDOT is also encouraging motorists to visit the “Historic Holiday Traffic” page at www.511PA.com which allows users to see how traffic speeds on the Wednesday before and Sunday after Thanksgiving in 2018 and 2019 compare to traffic conditions during a typical, non-holiday week. Users can choose their region and view an hour-by-hour, color-coded representation of traffic speeds to help them decide the best times to travel during the holiday.

While PennDOT will remove lane restrictions and suspend construction projects wherever possible, the “Historic Holiday Traffic” page also allows the public to view interstate restrictions that will be in place during the holiday travel period.

To help accommodate heavier traffic, the PA Turnpike will suspend maintenance and construction work and have all available lanes open beginning 5:00 AM on Tuesday, November 23 through 11:00 PM on Sunday, November 28. Additional maintenance and safety personnel will be patrolling during the holiday weekend. To report a crash or other emergency on the PA Turnpike, dial *11 via your mobile phone and share your direction and milepost location. Always remember [the keys to safety](#).

The public can check conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles in Pennsylvania by visiting www.511PA.com. The service, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information, and access to more than 1,000 traffic cameras. 511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional Twitter alerts accessible on the 511PA website.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, visit www.PATurnpike.com.

For more information on the Pennsylvania State Police, visit psp.pa.gov.

The holiday seat belt and DUI enforcement are funded through PennDOT's statewide annual distribution from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. For more information on PennDOT's highway safety efforts visit, www.PennDOT.gov/safety.

The public can join the discussion on social media using the hashtags #BeSafePA, #PASafeHoliday, and #OSH2021.

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