



pennsylvania
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 driving period just around the corner, the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), and Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission came together at the PennDOT Regional Traffic Management Center at the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) in Harrisburg to remind drivers to wear their seat belts, drive sober, and eliminate distractions behind the wheel as they prepare to take to the road for Thanksgiving.

Regional Traffic Management Centers throughout the commonwealth serve as hubs where PennDOT traffic control specialists monitor a network of 1,000 traffic cameras to help keep roads open and traffic flowing.

"We can all do our part to avoid crashes by always wearing a seat belt, designating a sober driver, and never driving distracted," said PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian. "We want everyone to arrive at their holiday destinations safely, but when crashes do happen, PennDOT and first responders will work quickly to help the motorists involved and keep traffic moving."

Operation Safe Holiday kicked off on November 14 with the "Click It or Ticket" Thanksgiving enforcement mobilization running through November 27. Aiming to keeping Pennsylvania's youngest travelers safe on the road, PSP will hold [child safety seat fitting clinics](#) at several locations across the state.

"Child safety seats reduce crash deaths and injuries, yet troopers cited 1,200 drivers last year for not having children secured. That is unacceptable," said Lt. Col. Jeremy Richard, Deputy Commissioner of Operations for the Pennsylvania State Police. "Parents and caregivers attending our clinics learn how to install and use car seats properly, and our trained child passenger safety technicians will check your seat for recalls, all at no cost to you."

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 23, through the New Year's holiday to crack down on drivers impaired by drugs or alcohol.

According to PennDOT data, during the 2021 holiday travel period beginning the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and running through January 2, 2022, there were 1,276 crashes involving an impaired driver, resulting in 41 fatalities.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike expects Thanksgiving to be the busiest travel holiday of the year with 3.5 million motorists traveling during the six-day period starting on Tuesday, Nov. 22 through Sunday, Nov. 27. Tuesday and Wednesday of Thanksgiving week will be the heaviest travel days, so travelers should plan their trips accordingly.

“We want all travelers to stay safe this holiday season,” said PA Turnpike CEO Mark Compton. “Holiday activities can increase our levels of stress and fatigue, and this can contribute to distracted driving. Other activities that take drivers’ attention off the road, including talking or texting on cellphones, eating, turning your head to talk with passengers, and adjusting vehicle controls are major safety threats. Avoid doing that while driving. And most importantly, if you are tired it is crucial that you ask someone else to drive or take a rest before getting behind the wheel.”

The partners encourage 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 2019 and 2021 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 and the turnpike 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.

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.

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.pa.gov/safety.

To learn more about the PA Turnpike safety, visit www.PATurnpike.com/rampup/safety-keys.

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

The public can join the discussion on social media using the hashtags #BeSafePA, #PASafeHoliday, and #OSH2022.

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