



Press Release

Press release from **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service** and **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority**

Making Derbyshire Safer Together

1st December 2020

Police and Fire join forces to crack down on drink and drug driving this Christmas

Throughout December, Derbyshire Constabulary and Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service will be working together to tackle those who take to the roads whilst under the influence of drink and drugs.

During last year's national operation, which took place over a two-week period in December, 3,231 motorists failed or refused to provide a sample. In addition, 1,175 drivers failed a roadside drug test.

In Derbyshire over the last three-years, we have recorded 351 collisions, where one or more driver was impaired with alcohol or drugs. These resulted in causing 386 injured casualties, with 105 being seriously injured and 23 persons were, sadly, killed in these tragic events.

The year 2020 has been a year like no other, and police and fire colleagues are preparing themselves to cope with unusual circumstances this month. Traditionally, the Christmas party season is spread out, starting in mid-November and continuing to the big day itself. This is not the case this year, and with restrictions still being in place, there are concerns that people will get carried away and have one drink too many at home.

It is feared that this could result in a higher number of drink and drug driving offences being committed this festive season, despite the tiered restrictions that are still in place.

Sergeant Matt Edwards, leading on the drink and drug drive Roads Policing Operation, said: "As Derbyshire citizens enter the festive season with restrictions still in place, it is hard to predict the severity of the impact this could have on drink/drug driving offences across our region.

"Unfortunately, no matter the circumstances, evidence suggests that people will still insist on fulfilling their selfish needs by getting behind the wheel after consuming drink or drugs. Our

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Gavin Tomlinson MBA MIFireE
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive



Roads Policing Unit attend all road collisions and have witnessed the devastating effect that these incidents can cause to its victims, their families and to the local community.

“It is a season associated with merriment and high-spirits (quite literally) and the result in more people drinking at home could lead to, not only a rise in individuals driving whilst intoxicated, but it also possesses an increased risk of people inadvertently being over the drink drive limit the following morning.

“People are more likely to be generous with their measures at home, which is easier to lose track of how much they’re consuming and this can impact on reaction times and performance behind the wheel - long after a drinking session has come to an end.

“Do not consider driving if you have had a drink. If you drive under the influence you will be stopped.”

Police will be stopping anyone suspected of drink or drug driving, operating stop sites across Derbyshire and performing both breath and drug testing. Anyone found to be over the limit will face the full force of the law.

Drivers risk up to six months’ imprisonment, an unlimited fine and a substantial driving ban if they are caught driving while above the legal limit. Anyone who causes a death while drink or drug driving faces up to 14 years’ imprisonment.

Hardyal Dhindsa, Derbyshire’s Police and Crime Commissioner, said: “Derbyshire’s residents have told me that road safety is their number one concern. As a result, the Roads Policing Team has been boosted and I have funded numerous community Speedwatch programmes.

“However, road safety is not purely about speeding. Drinking under the influence of alcohol or other substance is a major cause of accidents on our roads and it doesn’t just affect the person committing the crime. Too many innocent people are injured because a driver ignored the limits, or thought they were invincible.

“The hardships of the last nine months are not an excuse to flout the law and drink driving will be robustly policed. That’s why I urge all drivers to stay within the legal limits if they are thinking of driving anywhere so that they don’t risk making a difficult Christmas a tragic one.”

Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service Prevention Station Manager, Mark Whitelaw said: “On the run up to the festive season we have once again joined forces with our colleagues at Derbyshire police to raise awareness of the dangers and consequences of drink and drug driving through our joint ‘Don’t Get Wrecked’ campaign.

“Over the last three years there have been 351 road traffic collisions across Derbyshire where drink and drugs have been a contributing factor. Despite these figures and years of campaigning, sadly Firefighters and emergency services still see at first hand the devastating impact of such reckless actions.

“Our message is quite simple, don’t ever get behind the wheel of a car when under the influence of drink or drugs – book a taxi, appoint a designated driver, or take a walk, but don’t be tempted to drive. You’ll not only be putting your own life at risk, but also the lives of others.

“This year has been a challenge all around, so let’s work together to keep Derbyshire’s roads safe, so we can all enjoy a happy festive season.”

Seen someone drink driving?

Crime Stoppers are offering a reward of up to £1000 if you can provide information on a drink or drug driver, which leads to the arrest of one or more individuals resulting in them being formally charged.

Your anonymity is 100% guaranteed. To report an incident please contact them, via their online form at <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/give-information-anonymously> or over the phone on 0800 555 111.

ENDS

For more information please contact Gina Staley on gstaley@derbys-fire.gov.uk or 07827 937184.