Buzzed driving and the holiday season

The holiday season is supposed to be a time for family, friends, and festive celebrations, but it is unfortunately also a time when there is a tragic jump in the number of alcohol-related highway fatalities each year between Thanksgiving and New Year’s.

That is why the Steuben County Sheriff’s Office, Catholic Charities Steuben/Livingston Prevention Services and more are joining with other national, state, and local highway safety and law enforcement officials to remind everyone this holiday season to always designate a sober driver before each holiday party or event involving alcohol.

Remembering to designate a sober driver before the party begins is just one of several, simple steps to help avoid a tragic crash or an arrest for impaired driving during the holiday season. Other important reminders include:

- Never get behind the wheel of your vehicle if you’ve been out drinking.
- If impaired, call a taxi or call a sober friend or family member to come and get you.
- Just stay where you are and sleep it off until you are sober.
- If you are hosting a party this holiday season, remind your guests to always plan ahead to designate a sober driver, always offer alcohol-free beverages during the event, and make sure all of your guests leave with a sober driver; and Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk. Take the keys and never let a friend leave your sight if you think they are about to drive while impaired.

Impaired driving is one of America’s deadliest problems. Nationally, more than 17,000 people died in alcohol-related highway crashes during 2003. Every 30 minutes, nearly 50 times a day, someone in America dies in an alcohol-related crash. Hundreds of thousands more are injured each year. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), about three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.

Since 1981, every President of the United States has proclaimed December “National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month” to help underscore the public’s commitment to preventing impaired driving and promoting the use of designated drivers and sober ride programs. The month of December and the New Year’s Eve holiday are also often highlighted by significant increases in state and local law enforcement efforts to combat impaired driving such as the use of sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols.

Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is simply not worth the risk. The consequences are serious and real. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be significant and not the way you want to spend your holiday season.

So remember, this holiday season, if you catch a buzz, catch a ride.
The holidays can be a great time to connect with loved ones, but the anticipation and preparations for the holidays can bring stress. There are many ways to cope with holiday stress, and some people choose to gamble. Gambling to cope with holiday stresses can lead to gambling problems. As mobile sports betting also becomes legal in NYS, it’s especially important to be aware of warning signs of problem gambling. Here are some ways to avoid gambling-related issues:

Know what activities are gambling. Gambling activities include the state lottery, slot machines, betting on sporting events, betting on card games, or any other activity where someone can win or lose valued items, like money.

Develop a budget and stick to it. Decide how much you can afford to spend. If you overspend, turn your finances over to a trusted friend or family member, ending the opportunity to overspend. You can also set spending limits on your credit cards considered and bank accounts.

Before attending events, decide if they are safe. If friends and family gather for sporting events or card games, visit before or after these games occur.

Remain mindful when giving gifts. Avoid gifting gambling-related items such as lottery tickets. These gifts could cause someone struggling with gambling to have increased gambling-related problems. It’s also important not to gift these to youth, as exposure to gambling activities at a young age increases the likelihood of developing a gambling addiction later in life.

The Finger Lakes Problem Gambling Resource Center has a neutral stance on gambling and exists to raise awareness of problem gambling and connect individuals and loved ones to local, barrier-free treatment. If you or a loved one struggles with a gambling-related issue, contact the Finger Lakes Problem Gambling Resource Center at (585) 351-2262 or email FingerLakesPGRC@nyproblemgambling.org.

Here’s to you and yours having a happy and healthy holiday season!

Responsibility gift this holiday season

Steuben County Underage Party & Drug Information Tip Line

Anyone with information relating to underage drinking such as parties, sales, etc. or information relating to illegal drugs, such as sales, dealers, or other suspicious activities are encouraged to use the tip line. The tip line is monitored seven days a week, 24 hours a day, all calls are kept anonymous.

1-844-378-4847

Catholic Charities Steuben/Livingston
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Prevention Educators:
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Steuben Prevention Coalition:
DFC Program Coordinator: Colleen Banik
Prog. Asst. Opioid Committee: Connie Terry
Prevention Counselors:
Jennifer Beaty—Haverling
Tara Chapman—Hammondsport
JSYRC Summer Program: x2228

These Prevention Services are programs of Catholic Charities Steuben/Livingston. In The Know is a regular monthly update about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs to help in the prevention of substance use and abuse. For more information or to be removed from the mailing list please contact Stacey, Prevention Services Supervisor at Stacey.Wing@dor.org, (607) 968-4123.
From all of us at Catholic Charities Steuben/Livingston Prevention Services (Steuben Council on Addictions, Bath Hope for Youth, The Steuben Prevention Coalition and the Impaired Driver Program) have a happy, healthy and safe holiday season!

Our staff will be off for the holidays Friday, December 24th and Friday December 31st to spend time with our families.

When it comes to alcohol, tobacco and marijuana don’t provide it!

Hosting an Underage Drinking Bash?

We’ll SEE You There