

Impaired Driving Awareness *Toolkit*



December is Impaired Driving Awareness Month

As the year winds down and the holiday season ramps up, December brings not only celebration but also increased risks on the road. That's why December is nationally recognized as Impaired Driving Awareness Month—a time to remind drivers, passengers, and communities about the dangers of impaired and distracted driving.

The Risks Are Real

Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, whether prescription, over-the-counter, or illegal substances, drastically increases the likelihood of a crash. Even small amounts of alcohol or certain medications can impair judgment, slow reaction times, and reduce coordination. Distracted driving—texting, scrolling, eating, or even adjusting the radio—can be just as deadly. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), distracted driving contributes to thousands of fatalities each year, while impaired driving accounts for nearly a third of all traffic deaths.

Why December Is Critical

The holiday season is marked by parties, family gatherings, and year-end celebrations. With more people on the roads and more chances of alcohol or drug consumption, the risk of impaired driving spikes. Shorter daylight hours and winter weather can make driving even more dangerous. December serves as a reminder to plan ahead, stay sober behind the wheel, and remain focused on the road.

Simple Steps to Stay Safe

1. Plan a Safe Ride: If you plan to drink, designate a sober driver, use public transportation, or call a rideshare service.
2. Stay Alert: Keep your attention on the road. Put your phone away and minimize distractions.
3. Know Your Medications: Some prescription and over-the-counter drugs can impair driving. Read labels and ask your doctor or pharmacist if it's safe to drive.
4. Speak Up: Encourage friends and family to make safe choices. Don't let someone drive impaired.
5. Set an Example: Model responsible driving behavior year-round.

Join the Movement

Communities, schools, and organizations across the country can use December to raise awareness, host campaigns, and educate drivers. From social media messaging to local activities, every effort helps save lives and prevent tragedies. This December, let's commit to sober, alert, and responsible driving. Every safe choice behind the wheel helps protect you, your loved ones, and everyone on the road.

Activities

🎄 Holiday Impaired Driving Awareness Activity

Purpose:

Help your community see the real impact of impaired driving – and inspire everyone to make safe choices this holiday season.

Step 1: Do a Little Research

- Find out how many impaired driving arrests your local law enforcement made in the past year. Contact local law enforcement for specific data.
- Then, look up how many crashes in your area were related to alcohol or drug use. Visit [SD Department of Public Safety Website](#) to find crash data.
- These numbers will help you tell your community's story in a powerful, visual way.

Step 2: Create a “Tree for Safe Celebrations”

- Put up a Christmas tree and decorate it using ornaments to represent your local data:
 - 🧑‍🚒 Color A: Number of impaired driving arrests
 - 🚗 Color B: Number of crashes involving alcohol or drugs
- Add a small sign or poster explaining what the colors mean and the message behind your display.
 - Example message: “Each ornament represents a life affected by impaired driving in our community. Let’s make this number smaller next year – plan ahead, drive sober, and keep the holidays safe for everyone.”

Step 3: Share Safe Celebration Tips

Encourage everyone to enjoy the holidays responsibly with a few easy reminders:

- Plan ahead – always choose a sober driver before you celebrate.
- Designate a sober ride – call a friend, taxi, or rideshare.
- Serve alcohol-free options – mocktails and hot cocoa count!
- Include activities that don’t involve alcohol – think games, crafts, or community lights tours.

Step 4: Spread the Message

- Share photos of your tree and your message on social media, at community centers, or in local businesses.
- Tag local partners, prevention coalitions, or law enforcement to help your message reach more people.



Text Message Maze Game

Purpose

Show how texting or using a phone takes your attention away — even for simple tasks like walking and driving.

Materials Needed

- Cones, chairs, ropes, or tape to create a walking “maze” or obstacle course
- A cell phone (participants can use their own)
- Printed “text messages” (see examples below) or a volunteer to text participants
- Stopwatch or timer

Set-Up

1. Design the Maze:

- Use cones, chairs, or tape to outline a short path (20–30 feet long).
- Include a few turns or small obstacles (such as a cone to step over or go around).
- Mark a Start and Finish line.

2. Have Two Runs:

- Run #1 (Focused): Participant walks the maze without distractions.
- Run #2 (Distracted): Participant walks again while reading and replying to a text message.

3. Prepare the Text Messages:

- You can use cue cards or have a volunteer send these in real time. Examples:
 - “Hey, what’s your favorite pizza topping?”
 - “What time do you want to meet later?”
 - “Can you text me your favorite emoji?”
- The goal is to make them type short, real replies while walking.

How to Run the Activity

1. Explain the rules: “You’ll walk through this maze twice — once focused, once while texting.”

- First run: Have them walk through without using their phone. Time them and note how smoothly they walk.
- Second run: Have them walk while reading and responding to a text. Time again and observe mistakes — bumping cones, stepping off course, or slowing down.

2. Compare times and outcomes. Ask:

- “What differences did you notice?”
- “Was it harder to stay focused?”
- “If this was a car, what could have happened?”

Wrap-Up / Talking Points

- Even small distractions can cause big mistakes.
- When driving, your eyes, hands, and mind must all stay focused on the road.
- A few seconds of texting at 55 mph equals driving the length of a football field blindfolded.
- Takeaway message: “If you can’t text while you walk, you definitely can’t text while you drive.”

Optional Add-Ons

- Offer “I Put My Phone Down” pledge cards or wristbands.
- Have participants post a selfie with the caption #EyesOnTheRoad or #DriveFocused.

Community + Media Campaigns

“Holiday Ride Home” Promotion

Work with bars or restaurants to offer free rides home or promote safe ride options during the holidays. Use coasters, posters, treats or table tents with prevention messages & safe ride options.

Holiday Safe Driving PSA

Record PSA's at your local radio stations or on video to post online. Sample messages could include:

- Hey adult listeners – the the students at ** High School want to send you a message this holiday season. Make a plan to celebrate safe and sober. We look up to you, and your actions speak louder than you think. Please follow our friendly tips: First be a friend, then a host. Serve non-alcohol drink options and NEVER provide alcohol to minors. When guests are leaving, make sure all drivers are sober because buzzed driving is the same as drunk driving. So - have a ball, not a buzz this holiday season.
- Hey everyone – quick holiday reminder! When you're driving, don't let your phone turn into the Grinch that steals your season. Texting, snapping, and scrolling can wait until you've parked. Your friends want to see you at the party... not sliding into a snowbank because you were checking notifications. So keep your hands on the wheel, not the keyboard. Stay merry, stay bright, and most of all – stay focused. Happy holidays, and don't drive distracted!

“Message in a Mug”

Partner with coffee shops to print short prevention messages on coffee sleeves or stickers

- Drive Awake, Not Distracted.
- Coffee is an approved beverage to consume before driving.
- Enjoy the latte. Save the texting for later.
- Your coffee is hot, your phone can wait. Drive distraction-free.
- No 'latte' texting while driving.

Partner with Schools or Youth Groups

Host poster or video contests about safe driving.

Have students decorate parking lots with chalk messages like “Friends Don't Let Friends Drive High.”

Social Media



Social Media Countdown

Post “12 Days of Safe Driving” tips leading up to Christmas or New Year’s — each day highlights a different prevention tip.

- Day 1: Plan Ahead - Before you head out, plan your route and choose your playlist so you’re not fumbling with your phone on the road.
- Day 2: Designate a Sober Driver - Holiday parties happen, but impaired driving shouldn’t. Always designate a sober driver.
- Day 3: Phone on Do Not Disturb - Silence notifications so texts and snaps don’t tempt you while driving.
- Day 4: Buckle Up Every Time - Seat belts save lives — the holidays are no exception.
- Day 5: Slow Down for Snow & Ice - Winter roads can be tricky. Give yourself extra time and extra space.
- Day 6: Keep Your Eyes on the Road - Glancing at holiday lights is fun — just do it after you park.
- Day 7: No Text Is Worth a Crash - If it can wait while you celebrate, it can wait while you drive.
- Day 8: Rest Before You Drive - Holiday stress is real. Don’t drive tired — fatigue is a distraction too.
- Day 9: Secure Your Gifts - Packages, décor, and shopping bags shouldn’t slide around while you drive.
- Day 10: Avoid Driving After Certain Medications - Some cold and flu meds can make you drowsy. Read the label before you get behind the wheel.
- Day 11: Keep Your Windshield & Lights Clear - Snow, frost, and fog reduce visibility — wipe down before you go.
- Day 12: Celebrate Safely - Make the holidays joyful, not tragic. Drive sober, phone-free, and focused every trip, every time.



Download
Social Media
Graphics [HERE](#)

Distracted Driving



Option 1

Holiday roads are busy, icy, and unpredictable. Adding distractions—texts, calls, scrolling—puts everyone at risk. This season, give the gift of safety: stay focused, drive alert, and arrive home to the people who matter most.

Option 2

Winter crashes spike when drivers look away “just for a second.” As holiday travel picks up, keep your eyes on the road and your hands off your phone. Let’s keep our community safe this season.

Option 3

Snowy roads + distracted driving = a holiday no one wants. Stay alert. Stay safe.

Option 4

No text is worth trading holiday cheer for a trip to the ER. Put the phone away and drive distraction-free this season.

Option 5

Between the snowflakes, holiday lights, and crowded roads, your attention is already in high demand. Don’t add your phone to the mix. Drive distraction-free this winter.

Option 6

The most important thing you bring home for the holidays is yourself. Stay focused behind the wheel—your family is waiting.

Option 7

Driving distracted? That’s a one-way ticket to the Naughty List.

Option 8

Holiday tip: The only thing you should be wrapping this season is presents—not your car around a pole.

Option 9

’Tis the season... to put the phone down before your car ends up looking like a crumpled gift bag.

Option 10

If your phone jingles while driving, let it jingle all the way... until you park.



Driving Under the Influence

Option 1

Santa checks his list twice. You should check your ride home plan twice, especially if you're drinking.

Option 2

Holiday gatherings should end with hugs, not handcuffs or hospital trips. If you're under the influence, don't drive. Plan a sober ride.

Option 3

Winter roads are already challenging—icy patches, blowing snow, and early darkness make driving risky even when you're completely alert. Adding alcohol or drugs only multiplies the danger. Impaired driving slows your reaction time and makes it harder to handle slippery conditions. This season, commit to driving sober so every trip ends with a warm homecoming instead of a cold emergency room.

Option 4

The holidays are full of lights, laughs, and celebrations—but they also bring an increase in drunk- and drugged-driving crashes. Before the festivities begin, take a moment to plan how you'll get home. Whether it's a designated driver, a sober friend, or a rideshare, having a plan keeps everyone safer. Don't let a night of holiday cheer turn into a lifetime of regret.

Option 5

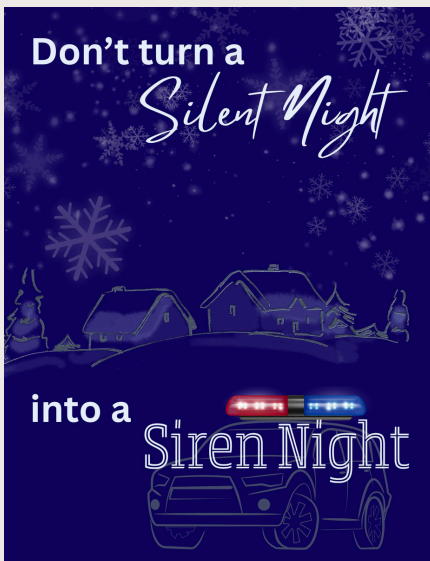
This season, our community depends on each of us to make responsible choices. Impaired driving doesn't just endanger the person behind the wheel—it puts families, kids, and neighbors at risk. If you're drinking or using drugs, even "just a little," don't test your luck on winter roads. Choose a sober ride and help keep our community whole this holiday season.

Option 6

We know the holidays are full of fun, food, and a little too much eggnog at times—but here's the thing: the only thing that should be "lit" during the holidays is your tree. Impaired driving on icy roads is a combination nobody wants. Make a smart plan, choose a sober ride, and keep the holidays merry instead of messy.



Posters



Download
Posters HERE

Resources

South Dakota Office of Highway Safety - Drive Safe SD

The [Drive Safe SD](#) website offers a lot of driver-safety tips — covering speeding, distracted driving, impaired driving, seat belt use, and more.

Their [Driving Tips](#) page gives practical advice: choosing passengers wisely, predictability (signals, mirror checks), and reducing distractions.

They also have a defensive driving section that explains how to “[control what you can](#),” anticipate other drivers’ mistakes, and give yourself reaction time.

Alive at 25 Defensive Driving Course

Offered via the South Dakota Safety Council in partnership with the SD Department of Public Safety. It’s designed for young drivers (ages 14–24) to build awareness around risky driving behaviors. It’s a 4.5-hour course with discussions, role-playing, peer interaction, and more — no driving test, but a certificate of completion.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration - NHTSA

The leading federal agency for vehicle and roadway safety.

What they offer:

- Distracted, impaired, and drowsy driving campaigns
- Child passenger safety guides
- Teen driver resources
- [Seasonal safety campaigns](#) (winter driving, holiday DUI prevention)

National Safety Council (NSC)

A nonprofit with strong educational materials.

Resources include:

- Defensive driving courses (online and in-person)
- [Teen Safe Driving Resources](#)
- Safety fact sheets and infographics

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

Research-heavy and great for community education.

They provide:

- Distracted and impaired driving research
- Teen driver training resources
- Senior driver resources
- Roadside emergency guidelines

Northeast Prevention Resource Center - NEPRC

An organization that supports prevention programming in northeastern South Dakota.

- Offers [peer leadership programming](#) such as SD Peer Leadership and Natural Helpers.
- Provides resources for prevention campaigns and toolkits
- NEPRC Has a [Prevention Resource Library](#) with thousands of items on a variety of topics.
- Contact neprc@humanserviceagency.org with any questions.