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**The North Providence Police Department is  
Mobilizing the Impaired Driving Task Force for the Thanksgiving Weekend  
Reminding Citizens to *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* and  
*If you Feel Different – You Drive Different – Drive High Get a DUI***

**The North Providence Police Department will be leading the Northern Rhode Island Impaired Driving Task Force on Friday, November 23, 2018 from approximately 7 PM until 3 AM to monitor traffic conditions as motorists enjoy their holiday weekend.** Thanksgiving is a time for spending time with family and friends. But it also a time when we must remind people that drinking, and driving is not a good holiday combination. Thanksgiving is one of most heavily traveled weekends of the year and motorists should be aware of the potential risks on our roadways.

**Along with the North Providence Police Department, law enforcement officers from the following bordering jurisdictions will participate in the mobilization; the Smithfield Police Department, the Lincoln Police Department, the Providence Police Department, the Pawtucket Police Department and the Johnston Police Department.**

**We invite the news media to ride-along with a Drug Recognition Expert, so they can get a first-hand look at how these highly trained officers detect and process suspected drugged drivers. With marijuana sales in Massachusetts taking effect this week, Rhode Island's message to those who smoke, and drive is simple, if you drive high, you will get a DUI.**

The Breath Alcohol Testing (BAT) vehicle will be stationed at the North Providence High School to process impaired drivers, but also should serve as a warning to would-be drunk or drugged drivers. The BAT will also serve as a command post to accept suspected impaired drivers from police departments in the Northern section of Rhode Island.

This year Rhode Island law enforcement is partnering with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to stop impaired drivers and help save lives.

The high-visibility national enforcement campaign, *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*, will begin on Wednesday, November 21, 2018 and will continue thru Sunday, November 25, 2018. During this period, local and state police will show zero tolerance for drunk and drugged driving. There will be an increased number of officers on the road conducting enforcement, with the aim to drastically reduce instances of drunk and drugged driving on our roadways.

Nationally, statistics show a frightening trend in impaired driving. According to NHTSA, 10,874 people were killed in drunk and drugged driving crashes in 2017. On average, 10,000 people were killed each year from 2011 to 2017 – one person killed every 48 minutes in 2017. That’s the equivalent of 20 jumbo jets crashing each year, with no survivors.

In Rhode Island, alcohol involved fatalities increased from 19 in 2016 to 34 in 2017. These numbers reveal that 41% of our fatalities were alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities, whereas the national average for these type deaths is 29%.

Therefore, Rhode Island law enforcement is working with RIDOT and NHTSA to remind drivers that drunk and drugged driving is not only illegal, it is a matter of life and death. As you head out this Thanksgiving weekend, remember: ***“Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over,” “If you feel different, you drive different,” and “Drive High! Get a DUI!”***

Historically, nighttime is the most dangerous time to be out on the roads. During the 2017 holiday periods, 78 percent of drunk/drugged driving crash fatalities occurred between 6 PM and 3AM.

“We’re stressing the dangers of driving impaired to our community,” said North Providence Police Colonel David Tikoian. “Drunk driving is a problem in Rhode Island, with more than 34 people dying annually. If you’re out on the roads and you see someone driving drunk, please call us. You could help save a life,” he said.

The North Providence Police Department, RIDOT and NHTSA are reminding citizens of the many resources available to get them home safely. “Drunk driving is not acceptable behavior,” said Colonel Tikoian. “It is essential to plan a sober ride home before you ever leave your holiday location. That’s why, during this holiday, the North Providence Police Department will be teaming up with other police departments across the state. We will make zero exceptions for drunk and drugged driving. There are just no excuses,” he said.

The North Providence Police Department has always put an emphasis on the dangers of impaired driving. Arresting those who are not fit to be operating a motor vehicle has been a priority. Thus far in 2018, the North Providence Police Department has already arrested 73 people for driving under the influence. This figure has already surpassed the total number of DUI arrests in years past. In 2017 there were 53 arrests; in 2016 there were 48 arrests; in 2015 there were 66 arrests; in 2014 there were 61 arrests; and in 2013 there were 59 arrests.

Colonel David Tikoian recommends safe alternatives to drinking and driving:

- Remember that it is never okay to drink and drive. Even if you’ve had one alcoholic beverage, designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation to get home safely.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, call 911.
- If you have a friend who is about to drive after drinking, take the keys away and decide to get your friend home safely.
- Stay overnight or at a hotel
- Call a taxi or other ride-sharing alternatives

For more information about the *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* campaign, visit [www.TrafficSafetyMarketing.gov](http://www.TrafficSafetyMarketing.gov).

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