

# Press Release



**Greene County Public Health**  
*A Safe Communities Grantee of Ohio Department of Public Safety*  
*Ohio State Highway Patrol-Traffic Safety Division*  
360 Wilson Drive, Xenia, OH 45385



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Officials Kick Off Campaign Reminding Everyone To Drive Sober** *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Campaign Runs August 16-September 2*

**XENIA, OH**—During the Labor Day holiday period, including the end of summertime and the busy holiday weekend, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) will be working alongside the law enforcement community in Greene County to decrease impaired driving. From August 16 through September 2, Greene County law enforcement will be participating in the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over high-visibility enforcement period. In support of the law enforcement community’s dedication to protecting the lives of residents in their communities, you’ll see officers working together during this time to take drunk drivers off the roads. No matter how you plan to celebrate the end of summer this year, make sure you plan to do it safely.

### **The Facts According to NHTSA**

- In 2022, there were 13,524 people killed in drunk-driving crashes.
- Approximately one-third of all traffic crash fatalities in the United States involve drunk drivers (with Blood Alcohol Concentration – BAC – at or above .08 g/dL).
- Although it’s illegal to drive when impaired by alcohol, in 2022 one person was killed every 39 minutes in a drunk-driving crash on our nation’s roads.
- The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2022 was 2.9 times higher at night than during the day.
- Males are more likely than females to be driving drunk when involved in fatal crashes — in 2022, 23% of males were drunk, compared to 17% of females.

### **Greene County Statistics**

In 2023, Greene County documented a total of 153 OVI crashes (operating a vehicle impaired), of which 128 were directly related to alcohol. There was a total of five (5) traffic fatalities in Greene County during 2023, which represented a 66% decrease from 2022 and the lowest number of fatalities in about 5 years. These national and local statistics are why the Safe Communities Coalition, a program through Greene County Public Health, is working together with NHTSA to remind drivers that drunk driving is not only illegal; it’s a matter of life and death. As you head out to festivities during the end of summer and Labor Day weekend, remember: **Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.**

“We want our community members to understand that it’s our first priority to keep people safe, so we’re asking everyone to plan ahead if they know they’ll be out drinking,” said Loressa Gonyer, Safe Communities Coordinator. “The Drive Sober campaign is an awareness effort to get the message out that

drunk driving is illegal, and it takes lives. Let's make this a partnership between law enforcement and drivers: Help us protect the community and put an end to this senseless behavior," she said.

There are plenty of options to help impaired drivers get home safely, such as designating a sober driver or calling a taxi or rideshare. If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact **1-800-GRAB-DUI or \*DUI**. Remember: A few dollars spent on a ride home is a lot cheaper than a DUI, which can cost up to \$10,000. Something else to consider: Don't ever be too proud or embarrassed to ask for a ride. Allowing a sober driver to help you get home safely keeps you and others safe. What's more embarrassing than asking for a sober ride home? Spending the night in jail. Having your car impounded. Losing your job or your security clearance. Take your pick.

No one should mix drinking and driving, and no one is immune to the effects of drinking. If you find yourself drunk and stranded with your vehicle, give your keys to a sober driver who can safely drive you home. Remind your friends to never get into a vehicle with a drunk driver. If you have a friend who is about to drive after drinking, take away their keys and help them get home safely. Most importantly: Always have a plan before you head out for the evening. If you wait until after you've been drinking to figure out how to get from one place to the next, you will already be too impaired to make the right choice.

### **Campaign KickOff**

Greene County Safe Communities will be kicking off this campaign with a short press conference at 10:00am on Friday, August 23, 2024, at the Holiday Inn and Homewood Suites Inn located at 2800 Presidential Drive in Fairborn in conjunction with the Trans Am Nationals. Lt. Hilderbrandt, Ohio State Highway Patrol, will be speaking on the dangers of and statistics associated with impaired driving. Members of local law enforcement will also be present, and local resident, Matthew VanDonkelaar, will receive the *Saved by the Helmet* award. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

For more information on impaired driving, visit [www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving](http://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving). For more information about Greene County Safe Communities and how you can be involved, please contact Loressa at 937-374-5655 or email her at [lgonyer@gcph.info](mailto:lgonyer@gcph.info). For more information on Greene County Public Health, please call 937-374-5600 or visit the website at [www.gcph.info](http://www.gcph.info).

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