

Kansas Department of Transportation

Bureau of Transportation Information

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KDOT and KHP Encourage Safe Travels for Independence Holiday

Traditionally, the Fourth of July holiday creates one of the busiest travel times on roads and highways in Kansas. Unfortunately, an increase in traffic increases the likelihood of traffic crashes, injuries and deaths.

The Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) will place additional troopers on Kansas' highways from Friday night, July 1st, through Monday, July 4th, to focus on impaired driving and other crash-causing violations, and assisting motorists in need.

"Despite public awareness and stiff penalties, drunk drivers remain a problem on Kansas highways," said Colonel William Seck, Superintendent of the KHP. "If alcohol is going to be part of your Fourth of July celebration, please don't get behind the wheel; plan ahead and use a designated driver."

Troopers also will continue to emphasize the "Click It or Ticket" message, reminding travelers to wear their seat belts not only during the holidays but whenever they are traveling in a vehicle. Motorists are reminded that they will be ticketed for not wearing their seat belt if they are stopped and ticketed for other infractions.

According to Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) statistics, one person died and 160 others were injured as a result of 516 crashes on Kansas' roadways during last year's 78-hour Fourth of July holiday reporting period. During that 78-hour period, 36 of the 516 crashes were alcohol-related and 23 injuries were caused by alcohol. While 2004 statistics were

an improvement over 2003 statistics (541 crashes, with 53 alcohol-related; 5 fatalities, with 2 caused by alcohol; and 51 of 276 injuries related to alcohol), lowering the number of fatalities and injuries on Kansas highways is a top priority for both KDOT and the KHP.

KDOT reminds travelers that it provides road information via its 511 phone service to assist them in planning their trips and as they travel.

511 provides route-specific road condition, weather, and road closure information 24 hours a day. “Informed travelers can make informed decisions that may assist them in increasing their travel safety,” said Barb Blue, KDOT’s 511 Project Manager. Travelers are encouraged to call 511 from their landline or cellular phones when they are not driving. Similar information is also available on the Web at <http://511.ksdot.org>.

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This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request. For information about obtaining an alternative format, contact the Bureau of Transportation Information, 700 SW Harrison St., 2nd Fl West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754 or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice) (TTY).