

Make it to the table this Thanksgiving

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois State Police want you to make it to the table safely this Thanksgiving by buckling up and driving sober. Increased traffic contributes to an increase in crashes that sadly often result in serious injury or death. Last year in Illinois, 15 people died instead of celebrating the holidays with their family and friends.

“Traffic crashes are almost entirely preventable by changing driver behavior,” said Cynthia Watters, bureau chief of Safety Programs and Engineering at IDOT. “Driving distracted or impaired significantly increases the likelihood of a crash, and not wearing your seat belt increases your risk of serious injury or death.”

The *Click It or Ticket/Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* campaign runs Nov. 16-26. This year, IDOT is funding additional patrols and roadside safety checks by nearly 200 local law enforcement agencies.

"Every year, millions of motorists travel our nations roadways during the Thanksgiving weekend. The Illinois State Police will focus on the safety of all motorists by directing our patrol efforts on the ‘Fatal Four’ violations, the most common causes of fatal and serious injury traffic crashes: DUIs, speeding, seat belts and distracted driving," said state police Director Leo P. Schmitz. "Reduce your speed, buckle up, keep your eyes on the road, and please move over or slow down for any vehicle on the side of the road with emergency or hazard lights activated."

Now through the end of the year, Illinoisans also will see and hear messages about the dangers of driving impaired or without a seat belt. These messages are part of the *Life or Death Illinois* campaign launched by the department earlier this year.

“Safety is our No. 1 priority at IDOT,” Watters said. “Rigorous enforcement of traffic laws and campaigns like *Life or Death Illinois* are intended to save lives. Getting behind the wheel is a huge responsibility. One we should be thankful for and not take for granted.”

Learn more at lifeordeathillinois.com.