

Use caution this Labor Day

During the 2019 Labor Day holiday, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension-Rusk County, is partnering with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to help save lives by promoting the national enforcement campaign, Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over, which runs from Aug. 14-Sept. 2.

During this period, local law enforcement will show zero tolerance for drunk driving. Increased state and national messages about the dangers of driving impaired, coupled with enforcement and increased officers on the road, aim to drastically reduce drunk driving on U.S. roadways.

Unfortunately, statistics prove that there is still a lot of work to do to put an end to drunk driving. According to NHTSA, 10,874 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes in 2017.

On average, 10,000 people were killed each year from 2013 to 2017—one person was killed in drunk-driving crashes every 48 minutes in 2017. That's the equivalent of 20 jumbo jets crashing each year, with no survivors.

This is why Texas A&M AgriLife Extension-Rusk County is working with NHTSA to remind drivers that drunk driving is not only illegal, it is a matter of life and death.

During the 2017 Labor Day holiday period, there were 376 vehicle crash fatalities nationwide.

Forty-four percent of those fatalities involved drivers who had been drinking. More than one-third of the fatalities involved drivers who were



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drunk, and more than one-fourth involved drivers who were driving with a BAC almost twice the legal limit.

Age is a particularly risky factor: Among drivers between the ages of 18 and 34 who were killed in crashes over the Labor Day holiday period in 2017, 42 percent of those drivers were drunk, with BACs of .08 or higher.

Labor Day should be a time for friends and family to come together to enjoy the last days of summer. We need commitment from our community members that they will keep the streets free of drunk drivers so that everyone can have a safe holiday.

This is a campaign to get the message out that drunk driving is illegal and it takes lives.