

MEDIA RELEASE

**Owatonna Police Department
204 East Pearl Street
Owatonna, MN 55060**



**Keith E. Hiller
CHIEF OF POLICE**

For Release Immediately

For Further Information Contact

Sergeant, Jason Petterson

507-774-6303

Impaired Driving Kills the Holiday Spirit. Drive Sober. Drive Smart.

Extra DWI Patrols During the Holidays on Owatonna city streets Nov. 25 – Dec. 31

Owatonna, Minn. – The holidays will look a lot different in 2020. Many people will be staying home, celebrating with immediate family. The holidays often involve drinking during a family dinner, and sometimes people lose track of how many drinks they've consumed. This can often lead to a person unknowingly driving under the influence.

To help keep families together this holiday season, the Owatonna Police Department will be participating with law enforcement statewide in an extra DWI enforcement and awareness campaign running on weekends beginning Nov. 25 through Dec. 31.

Planning Ahead

Motorists need to plan ahead for sober rides, regardless of where they are drinking.

-During 2015 – 2019, 28 people died in drunk driving-related crashes during the holiday DWI extra enforcement period.

-Of the various holiday time periods throughout 2019, Thanksgiving and July 4th tied for the highest percentage of drunk driving-related fatalities.

-Nearly one out of every four deaths (22%) on Minnesota roads is drunk driving-related.

-In the last five years (2015 – 2019), there were 413 drunk driving-related traffic deaths in Minnesota, with 89 people killed in 2019 alone.

-Alcohol-related crashes not only take lives, they change them forever. An average of 357 life-changing injuries (2015-2019) are caused by alcohol-related crashes each year.

Owatonna Police Department – Exceeding Expectations!

The Choice is Yours

The decision to get behind the wheel after drinking is costing too many people their lives. The choice to drive drunk has contributed to 28 deaths on Minnesota roads from the day before Thanksgiving through Dec.30 (2012-2017).

DWI Consequences

- Loss of license for up to a year, thousands of dollars in costs and possible jail time.

- Repeat DWI offenders, as well as first-time offenders arrested at 0.16 and above alcohol-concentration level, must use [ignition interlock](#) in order to regain legal driving privileges or face at least one year without a driver's license.

- First-time offenders arrested at 0.16 and above are required to use interlock for one year.

- Offenders with three or more offenses are required to use interlock for three to six years, or they will never regain driving privileges.

A DWI is no Holiday

- Plan for a safe ride — designate a sober driver, use a safe, alternative transportation option, or stay at the location of the celebration
 - o With bars and restaurants closed due to COVID-19, many people will decide to drink at home. The same rules apply, make sure you designated a sober driver or crash on a couch, not in a vehicle, if you're leaving family gatherings.

- Speak up – Offer to be a designated driver or be available to pick up a loved one anytime, anywhere. If you see an impaired person about to get behind the wheel, get them a safe ride home.

- Buckle up — the best defense against a drunk driver.

- Report drunk driving — call 911 when witnessing impaired driving behavior. Be prepared to provide location, license plate number and observed dangerous behavior.

The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program brings area law enforcement, public health educators, engineers and emergency medical and trauma services together to reduce the number of traffic fatalities and severe injuries to zero in southeast Minnesota. The 11-county area encompasses: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties.

Holiday DWI Arrests (Day before Thanksgiving – Dec. 30)

Year	DWIs
2013	2,556
2014	2,565
2015	2,381
2016	2,271
2017	2,717
Total	12,490

DWI Arrests Year-Round

Year	DWIs
2015	25,371
2016	24,103
2017	25,128
2018	26,414
2019	27,378
Total	128,394

2015-2019	
Holiday	Percent of Drunk Driving Fatalities
Memorial Holiday	37.5
Fourth of July	36.8
Labor Day	26.1
Thanksgiving	22.2
Christmas	11.8
Halloween	23.3
St. Patrick's Day	50
Cinco de Mayo	53.3
New Year's (2015-2018)	20