



DECEMBER HOLIDAY FATALITY PREDICTIONS: **34 Georgia Crash Deaths Predicted During** **Combined Christmas and New Year's Holiday Travel Periods**

Last year, traffic crashes claimed the lives of 46 people in Georgia during the Christmas and New Year's holiday travel periods. This year, both the Christmas and New Year's holiday travel periods are 78 hours long. The official analysis-based predictions from our highway safety partners at the Georgia State Patrol and the Crash Reporting Unit of the Georgia Department of Transportation have now been released. As many as 34 total traffic deaths are predicted on Georgia roads during the upcoming Christmas-New Year's holiday period!

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY CRASH PREDICTIONS

The Christmas holiday traffic count will begin Christmas Eve at 6PM and end at midnight Sunday, December 27th. During the 78-hour period, the Georgia State Patrol and the Crash Reporting Unit at the Georgia Department of Transportation estimate **18 fatalities** will occur on Georgia roads. The crash estimate projects **2,226 traffic crashes** and **976 injuries**.

NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY CRASH PREDICTIONS

The New Year's holiday travel period begins at 6PM December 31 and ends at midnight Sunday, January 3, 2010. Estimates for the New Year's holiday travel period are for **16 fatalities**, **2,330 traffic crashes**, and **1,004 injuries**.

HISTORY: 2008 HOLIDAY TRAFFIC DEATHS

CHRISTMAS 2008: The DOT Crash Reporting Unit shows 24 people died on Georgia highways during the 102-hour Christmas holiday travel period last year. 1,261 injuries and 2,783 crashes were reported.

NEW YEAR'S 2008: During the 102-hour New Year's holiday period last year there were 2,998 traffic crashes resulting in 1,222 injuries and 22 traffic deaths.

TOO MANY ALCOHOL-RELATED CRASH DEATHS

Adding to the annual tragedy of Georgia's fatality totals, many of those 2008 fatal holiday crashes were alcohol-related. DOT Crash Reporting Unit data shows during the Christmas and New Year's holiday periods last year, nine traffic deaths involved alcohol impaired drivers. Additionally, 31 of the 46 people killed during the two holiday periods were not wearing seat belts. Eight of the victims were pedestrians.

DUI CRACKDOWN UNDERWAY - DRUNK DRIVERS GO TO JAIL

The state's Highway Safety Office has a sobering statewide warning that the goal of Georgia's *Operation Zero Tolerance (OZT)* impaired driving enforcement goal is zero deaths. "Operation Zero Tolerance means Over the Limit. Under Arrest," says GOHS Director Bob Dallas. "We support more than 500 agencies conducting their high visibility statewide DUI crackdown. The Georgia State Patrol and traffic enforcement officers statewide won't hesitate to arrest impaired drivers and impound their vehicles during this December Operation Zero Tolerance campaign crackdown."

LIFESAVING TRAVEL ADVICE - PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

The Governor's Office of Highway Safety has life-saving advice for motorists with travel plans for the holidays. Always plan for a designated driver and always buckle your safety belt. It's your best protection against an unexpected encounter with a drunk driver. "*Buckle-up, Slow Down and Drive Sober.*"

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