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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Debunking Impaired Driving Myths Around Holiday Season



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is issuing a warning to Floridians to take extra precaution on the roadways this holiday season. Impaired driving increases during the holidays—[drunk-driving related deaths spike 116% above the baseline average](#) on New Year’s Day. Myths abound about the ability for intoxicated people to drive safely. As the nation recognizes National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, Attorney General Moody is debunking some of these impaired driving myths in an effort to improve road safety.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Some people may think they’re okay to get behind the wheel when they are really putting themselves and everyone around them in danger. Myths about driving safely under the influence abound, but the truth is, if you are relying on a myth or quick cure to drive—then you shouldn’t. Instead, arm yourself with the facts and make a plan to avoid ending up in a dangerous situation this holiday season.”

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles [Crash Dashboard](#) is reporting more than 5,000 crashes due to driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. This resulted in nearly 600 fatalities because of impaired drivers. These numbers are expected to increase during the holiday season based off impaired driving [crash statistics from previous years](#).

Attorney General Moody is listing common myths associated with impaired driving and providing facts to debunk the falsehoods:

Myth: Having a high tolerance means it is okay to have a few drinks before driving.

Fact: [Even a small amount of alcohol](#) can cloud thinking, dim vision and slow reflexes.

Myth: If the travel distance is short, just drive slowly.

Fact: More than half of the crashes that cause injury or death [happen at speeds less than 40 mph and within 25 miles from home](#).

Myth: Stimulants like caffeine or even illicit substances enhance driving skills.

Fact: While stimulants may increase alertness, they [may also impede other necessary driving skills](#). Coffee can wear off quickly, and illicit substances can cause hyper-aggression or negatively affect multiple senses. Plus, using illicit substances may prove deadly, or land the user in prison.

Myth: Eating before drinking will keep blood alcohol levels below the legal limit.

Fact: Eating can slow the absorption of alcohol and other substances, [but it does not prevent it](#). Since the effects are not felt as quickly, it could lead to intaking more substances—causing even worse debilitation once the effects are felt.

Myth: If the car isn't moving, then the driver cannot be charged with a DUI.

Fact: [Florida Criminal Jury Instructions state](#) that actual physical control of a vehicle means the defendant must be in or on the vehicle and have the capability to operate the vehicle, regardless of whether the vehicle is being operated at the time.

More information can be found by visiting the Mothers Against Drunk Driving website. The MADD website is full of statistics, solutions and helplines for Floridians. To find out more information, click [here](#).