



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: CAPTAIN THOMAS PIKUL
FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL
(850) 617-3102

YOU SNOOZE, YOU LOSE. DON'T DRIVE DROWSY!

~ Drowsy Driving Prevention Week reminds motorists to get enough rest to drive alert ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) is leading the Drowsy Driving Prevention Week campaign starting this Labor Day weekend. DHSMV is partnering with the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Sheriffs Association, Florida Police Chiefs Association, Florida Trucking Association and AAA - The Auto Club Group to recognize September 1-10, 2017, as Drowsy Driving Prevention Week. DHSMV reminds motorists to get adequate rest before getting behind the wheel, take breaks to remain alert and never drive drowsy.

“Driving drowsy affects your reaction time and ability to focus, and can have dangerous, and sometimes deadly, consequences,” said DHSMV Executive, Director Terry L. Rhodes. “Get adequate rest before you get behind the wheel and employ safe driving techniques if you start to feel fatigue. Never drive drowsy.”

In 2008, eight-year old Ronshay Dugans lost her life after a cement truck driver fell asleep at the wheel and hit the school bus she was riding. Florida’s Ronshay Dugans Act was established in 2010 to honor her memory by recognizing the first week in September as Drowsy Driving Prevention Week, reminding Florida every year of the dangers of drowsy driving.

“Safe driving is everyone’s responsibility,” said FHP Director, Colonel Gene S. Spaulding. “A few simple precautions will ensure your safety and avoid the dangers of drowsy driving. Get plenty of rest before sitting behind the wheel and make the decision to pull into a rest area when you feel fatigued to *Arrive Alive.*”

Drowsy driving can be just as dangerous as drunk driving. Fatigue slows thought processes and reaction time, affects judgement and vision, impairs the senses and abilities and can cause micro-sleeping (“nodding off”) or falling completely asleep, making it very unsafe to drive.

“It is important all motorists understand drowsy driving is impaired driving,” said FDOT Secretary Mike Dew. “We want everyone traveling on our roadways to practice good habits behind the wheel and that includes not operating a vehicle while drowsy.”

“Driving when you are drowsy endangers not only yourself but those around you,” said Florida State University Police Chief David Perry, President of the Florida Chiefs Association. “The impact of driving while drowsy has proven to have tragic results. If you are feeling drowsy don’t get behind the wheel or simply pull over.”

“Protecting the citizens that we proudly serve is the primary mission of the Florida Sheriffs Association. Please join us by simply ensuring that no one drives without being sufficiently rested and alert. On behalf of our Florida Sheriffs, I enthusiastically endorse the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Drowsy



Driving Prevention Campaign,” said Sheriff Mark Hunter, President of the Florida Sheriffs Association.

“If you are driving drowsy, you are driving impaired because you are not at your best behind the wheel,” said Matt Nasworthy, Public Affairs Director for AAA - The Auto Club Group. “Don’t put your life and the lives of others at risk by not getting the proper sleep. Just missing two hours of sleep can quadruple a driver’s crash risk.”

DHSMV urges all drivers to be fully alert when operating a motor vehicle. Commercial motor vehicle drivers are required by federal and state law to adhere to hours-of-service regulations that put limits on when and how long they may drive.

As part of its commitment to commercial driver and carrier safety, the FHP’s Office of Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (OCVE) completed 540 education and outreach events with the commercial motor vehicle industry and conducted more than 100,000 commercial motor vehicle inspections in fiscal year 2017/2018. FHP OCVE inspections and safety audits are conducted in accordance with national standards and consistent inspection and auditing process helps to ensure vehicles who travel across state lines are held to the same safety standards. Commercial drivers can put in long hours on the road. FHP inspections ensure all motorists can Arrive Alive and keep commercial vehicles safely moving along Florida roads.

“Commercial drivers are all-too aware of the risks of drowsy driving on our roads,” said Ken Armstrong, president and CEO of Florida Trucking Association. “Whether you are driving a truck, a car or a motorcycle, safety is the number one priority—stay alert, know the signs of fatigue and stop to rest when you need to.”

DHSMV offers additional safety tips for all motorists to prevent drowsy driving and *Arrive Alive* at their destinations:

- Avoid driving at times when you would normally be asleep. Get enough rest before you drive.
- On long trips, take a break every 100 miles or two hours. Allow plenty of time to travel to your destination.
- If you start feeling tired while driving, pull over in a safe place and take a nap if you can.
- Drink caffeine. Two cups of coffee can increase alertness for several hours.
- Use the “buddy system” and switch drivers when needed.
- Read the warning information on all medications you take. If it will make you drowsy, do not drive a vehicle.

Visit the DHSMV’s website www.flhsmv.gov/drowsydriving for more information and resources to spread the word about drowsy driving prevention. Follow the campaign on social media by using the hashtag #DrowsyDrivingFL and to add or share drowsy driving prevention information.

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[The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles](http://www.flhsmv.gov) provides highway safety and security through excellence in service, education and enforcement. The department is leading the way to a safer Florida through the efficient and professional execution of its core mission: the issuance of driver licenses, vehicle tags and titles and operation of the Florida Highway Patrol. To learn more about DHSMV and the services offered, visit www.flhsmv.gov, follow us on Twitter [@FLHSMV](https://twitter.com/FLHSMV) or find us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FLHSMV). For safe driving tips and techniques, download the official [Florida Driver License Handbook](#).

