



Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning  
P.O. Box 30634, Lansing, MI 48909  
517-241-3332  
Michigan.gov/ohsp

November 20, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kendall Wingrove  
517-284-3147  
wingrovek@michigan.gov

## **INCREASED IMPAIRED DRIVING ENFORCEMENT KICKS OFF THANKSGIVING SEASON** ***Sobriety court graduate “grateful” for being pulled over***

Is it possible to be grateful for being pulled over? Many drivers who were arrested for drunk driving say they are thankful that they were taken off the road before they seriously injured or killed themselves or others.

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) and law enforcement partners announced the beginning of a *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* drunk driving crackdown over the holiday season with a sobriety court judge and graduate in Grand Rapids today. Increased drunk driving enforcement patrols will be out in every county across Michigan between November 22 and December 10.

“I put myself in a terrible circumstance,” said Mark Williams, sobriety court graduate. “I could have lost everything—including my own life or the life of another. I feel very grateful that did not happen. Now, I’m encouraging everyone to learn from my mistakes. Make smart decisions and get a safe ride home.”

In 2016, 416 people died in Michigan as a result of alcohol and/or drug-involved traffic crashes. During the same year, 2,986 (31 percent) of drivers in alcohol-involved crashes were between the ages of 25-34 and 2,279 (23.7 percent) were 24 or younger. Drivers with two or more drunk driving convictions may have the opportunity to apply to a sobriety court program in certain Michigan counties.

“Many of the people who enter my courtroom aren’t happy to be there,” said Judge Jeanine LaVille, 61<sup>st</sup> District Court. “Most, however, are grateful that they have the opportunity to work on their recovery and that they did not seriously harm or kill themselves or others by choosing to drive drunk.”

Of the 980 fatal crashes during 2016 in Michigan, 254 (25.9 percent) were alcohol-related, involving at least one drinking operator, bicyclist or pedestrian. On average, more than 10,000 people died nationwide every year in drunk-driving crashes from 2006-2015. One person is killed in a drunk-driving crash every 51 minutes in the United States. The Michigan OHSP launched [www.michigan.gov/360](http://www.michigan.gov/360) to encourage planning ahead before activities involving alcohol consumption.

“We’re encouraging everyone to pause and do a 360-degree assessment of how they plan to get home safely—before they begin to drink,” said Michael L. Prince, director of the OHSP. “Before you leave for a night out, consider these questions: How will you get there? How will you get home? Who is coming along?”

- 30 -

**N E W S R E L E A S E**  
**T R A F F I C S A F E T Y**