



\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

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## State Troopers in Eleven States Will be on the Lookout Over the New Year's Holiday

**Olympia, WA** – The Washington State Patrol (WSP) will join ten other western states law enforcement agencies with emphasis patrols over the New Year's Holiday.

The Western States Traffic Safety Coalition (WSTSC) will initiate a special effort this New Year's Eve to ensure dangerous driver behaviors don't result in the senseless loss of life and injury due to collisions on our roadways. The Coalition is made up of 11 states that include the Arizona Department of Public Safety, California Highway Patrol, Colorado State Patrol, Idaho State Police, Montana Highway Patrol, Nevada Highway Patrol, Oregon State Police, South Dakota Highway Patrol, Utah Highway Patrol, Washington State Patrol, and the Wyoming Highway Patrol.

These law enforcement agencies are committed and unified to keeping the public safe during this holiday. WSP Chief John R. Batiste stated; "We enjoy the opportunity to work with our neighbors of the west to give a unified message to the traveling public – Slow down! Drive sober and pay attention! And know that law enforcement works together and will always do what is necessary to keep dangerous drivers off our roads and keep you safe during the holidays."

This New Year's Eve emphasis on impaired driving will be the third WSTSC joint initiative in recent years with leaders from each agency working together to make sure that roadways are well covered and state borders pose no drop off in vigilance against unsafe driving. Batiste added, "We receive constant feedback from Washingtonians that underscores the public's demand that law enforcement strictly enforce laws that protect our loved ones and the traveling public. Impaired driving, speed and distracted driving can turn holidays from a time of celebration to time of sorrow and we are going to do all we can to keep that from happening."

An average of 300 people die in the US each year in impaired driving crashes alone the week between Christmas and New Year's. Last year, there were over 10,000 people killed nationwide in impaired driving crashes accounting for nearly one-third of the yearly driving fatalities. These deaths are 100% preventable. The tragedy of these deaths is felt year-round, but for many, most strongly during the holidays. Last year between Christmas and New Year's Day, the WSP made 359 arrests

for impaired driving. This shows that people are still making poor choices. Because of those choices, the WSP will be out looking for these impaired drivers, in hopes that all travelers arrive safely.

Remember - driving impaired by any substance—alcohol or drugs, whether legal or illegal—is against the law in all states. Law enforcement officers are trained to observe drivers' behavior and to identify impaired drivers. Even in states where marijuana laws have changed, it is still illegal to drive under the influence of the drug. The WSTSC encourages everyone to plan ahead, especially when celebrating any holiday, and to never get behind the wheel impaired or in a car with an impaired driver. Always obey speed limits and remember that bad weather conditions may decrease the appropriate speed on any road at any time. Wear your seatbelts and keep your focus on the road, not your cell phones or entertainment devices.

Most of all, make sure you get home for and back from the holidays safely. We want you to be around for a great New Year in 2022!

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