



News

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95 Alive – Christmas Drink Drug Drive

There are 287 reasons why this year's Christmas drink and drug drive campaign in York and North Yorkshire is launched today. That's the number of people killed and seriously injured in the past five years because of drink driving. People injured because of drug driving is hard to assess but it's known to be a mounting problem.

This year the warnings are you will get caught, you will lose your licence, you could be killed or you could kill someone else. Drink and drug driving wrecks lives.

North Yorkshire Police are working with the Fire and Rescue Service, North Yorkshire County Council and many other agencies through the 95 Alive York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership to drive the message home. The campaign is supported by a mother whose 17 year old daughter was killed by a driver who had drunk 10 pints before he ploughed into the back of the taxi she was in.

North Yorkshire Police are warning drivers there will be no escape and that they could find themselves without a licence for Christmas.

Working in partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service, special fast-track courts have been put in place which could see drivers banned before Christmas.

This year every officer across the force will be on the lookout for drivers affected by drink or drugs. Operation Drystone will also support the campaign targeting giving extra support to areas requiring a more concentrated presence.

Officers will be targeting known hotspots in towns and cities as well as remote rural establishments where drivers think they can go undetected.

There will be more officers on patrol who are trained to carry out Field Impairment Testing on anyone suspected of driving while unfit through drugs.

Police are also encouraging people to make use of the Crimestoppers service. If anyone knows of anyone who regularly drinks and drives, or takes to the wheel after using drugs,

you can give information without giving your name and you may qualify for a cash reward. Just call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Speaking at today's launch, Assistant Chief Constable Tim Madgwick said: "This year will see our commitment to road safety intensify as we push more resources into clamping down on drunk and drug driving. It is unacceptable at any time of year, but during the festive season there is an increase in the number of people willing to take the risk - a risk which is simply not worth taking. At best you will lose your licence, possibly your job, at worst you could lose your life or kill someone else. It is simply not worth it.

"This year, there will be no escape from police with every officer actively on the look-out for illegal drivers. Once caught, our fast-track court service could see you losing your licence - just in time for Christmas."

Drink and drug drive images have been put on 17 fire and rescue vehicles which will be touring the County over Christmas to remind people of the dangers. Deputy Chief Fire Officer Chris Anderson said:

"Each year North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service has to attend Road Traffic Collisions caused by drivers getting behind the wheel whilst under the influence of either drink or drugs. We see first hand the devastation that is caused.

"As a partner organisation of 95 Alive we are determined to increase awareness of the risks and reduce the number of these incidents. Several of our Fire Appliances and Specialist Support Vehicles will be carrying large photographic messages on their bodywork to press the message home.

"Everyone wants to enjoy the festive holiday season and we certainly don't wish to spoil that enjoyment, however it is vitally important that people understand that driving whilst under the influence is not an option."

Chris Sykes, whose daughter was killed by a drink driver said: "We were devastated when Lindsay was killed, it wrecked our lives. The driver was sentenced to eight years in prison. Lindsay was a totally innocent victim, but this is an example of what drink or drug driving can do, and so often it's not the drunk or drug driver who pays the price. It is the families and loved ones left behind whose lives are devastated forever. This is too high a price to pay, people have to see the dangers."

North Yorkshire County Council Road Safety Officers will be touring the County with a Christmas Drink Drive Roadshow. County Councillor John Fort, Executive Member for Road Safety, said: "With 30 people killed and 257 seriously injured because of drink driving in the past five years this is a crucial campaign. Through the festive season many people will be out celebrating, we're just urging them to leave the car at home, get a taxi, or have a Designated Driver. It could mean the difference between a Merry Christmas and a Nightmare Christmas."