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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**THIS JULY 4TH THE MAINE BUREAU OF HIGHWAY SAFETY
SAYS, “WE THE PEOPLE WANT SAFER ROADS!”**

[Augusta, Maine] – Mainers love to celebrate the 4th of July with family, friends, food and celebrations highlighted by fireworks. But the fact is, this favorite American independence holiday typically increases drinking and impaired driving, which can potentially lead to deadly consequences. The Maine Bureau of Highway Safety is reminding the motoring public to celebrate responsibly: designate a sober driver or plan for a safe ride home. Don’t sacrifice your independence or anyone’s safety by driving impaired.

“As always, Maine Law Enforcement Officers are on the frontline of defense when it comes to keeping all road users safe from impaired drivers”, said Chief Jamie Pelletier from the Madawaska Police Department. “This July 4th Holiday, Law Enforcement will be out patrolling Maine’s roadways, with a goal of reducing impaired driving. The mission, to keep the communities we serve and protect safe”, added Chief Pelletier.

Driving impaired by alcohol and/or drugs puts you, your passengers, and everyone on the road at risk. Law Enforcement presence will be increased on Maine roadways during the July 4th holiday, to improve safety across the state. Here in Maine, between 2020 and 2023, there were four fatalities due to motor vehicle crashes during the July 4th holiday period. One fatality in 2020, did occur from impaired driving.

July 4 th Holiday Weekend Fatalities		
Year	Total # of fatalities	# of fatalities with BAC ≥ .08
2020	2	1
2021	0	0
2022	1	0
2023	1	0
Total	4	1

Buckle Up. Drive Safely.



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“Alcohol lowers inhibitions and boosts confidence. Impaired drivers may think they can get away with driving without getting caught, especially those that have driven impaired before and did not crash or get stopped by police”, says Lauren Stewart, Director of the Bureau of Highway Safety. “But choosing to drive impaired on drugs or alcohol is a bad choice and an unnecessary risk just waiting for a terrible consequence. Have fun, make good choices, and live another day to celebrate with friends and family.”

The Maine Bureau of Highway Safety would like to offer the following tips to help all motorists celebrating the July 4th Holiday, do so safely and responsibly:

- Know that it is never okay to drive while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Before celebrating, designate a sober driver. Plan to stay where you are, or plan to use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.
- Be on the lookout for possible impaired drivers on Maine roadways. If you witness a vehicle operating erratically on the road, call 9-1-1 or contact your local law enforcement agency.

The Maine Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Highway Safety asks you to consider: Would you rather pay for a safe and sober ride home or run the risk of getting an OUI conviction? Make the responsible decision to plan ahead and avoid the loss of your independence this July 4th Holiday.



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