National Sheriffs' Association

THE SHERIFF'S SIGNAL

A National Traffic Safety Brief to Support Safe Roads and Strong Communities



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ON THE ROAD TO PREVENTION: COMBATING IMPAIRED DRIVING

Impaired driving continues to pose a serious threat to communities nationwide, with law enforcement agencies facing evolving challenges related to alcohol, drug, and polysubstance impairment. This newsletter highlights current trends, enforcement efforts, legislative developments, and community-based initiatives aimed at improving roadway safety and reducing preventable crashes.

Summer 2026

KEY SAFETY METRICS AND TRENDS

IN 2024, 11,904 PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING CRASHES IN THE UNITED STATES — ABOUT ONE PERSON EVERY 44 MINUTES.

https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813791





THE NSA SUPPORTS EXPANDING THE DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS (DUID) STATUTES TO INCLUDE ALL IMPAIRING SUBSTANCES

The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) is continuing to raise awareness about the growing dangers of drug-impaired driving and the need for stronger Driving Under the Influence of Drugs (DUID) laws that address all impairing substances.

NSA officials point to the increasing presence of alcohol, illicit drugs, prescription medications, synthetic substances, and polysubstance use as major public safety concerns on roadways nationwide. As legalization and decriminalization laws evolve, sheriffs' offices face increasing challenges in identifying, enforcing, and prosecuting drug-impaired driving offenses, particularly as drug-impaired drivers are often more difficult to detect, prosecute, and connect with treatment resources than alcohol-impaired drivers.

The NSA continues to advocate for expanded DUID statutes, improved training, and greater public awareness efforts aimed at reducing impaired driving.

NIAGARA COUNTY SHERIFF JOINS MEMORIAL DAY CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT IMPAIRED DRIVING

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office joined law enforcement agencies across New York during Memorial Day weekend as part of the statewide **STOP-DWI High Visibility Engagement Campaign** aimed at reducing impaired driving and improving roadway safety.

Held May 22–25, 2026, the campaign combined increased enforcement efforts with public awareness messaging to encourage drivers to make safe and responsible choices during one of the busiest travel weekends of the year. Officials emphasized the importance of planning ahead, using designated drivers or rideshare services, and remaining alert for impaired motorists on local roadways. As communities prepare for the upcoming Fourth of July holiday, sheriffs' offices may wish to consider similar enforcement and education campaigns to help reduce impaired driving and keep roadways safe.



EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

VICTIMS OF IMPAIRED DRIVING (VOID)

"Victims of Impaired Drivers, known as VOID, is a grassroots organization made up of victims and survivors of impaired-driving crashes who have transformed their pain and loss into a powerful force for change. Through advocacy, education, and collaboration with lawmakers, judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement, they have played a pivotal role in strengthening Oklahoma's impaired-driving laws. In the past three years alone, their efforts have helped achieve more meaningful legislative progress than was seen in the previous two decades. Their compassion, dedication, and unwavering commitment continue to make Oklahoma's roads safer and save lives."

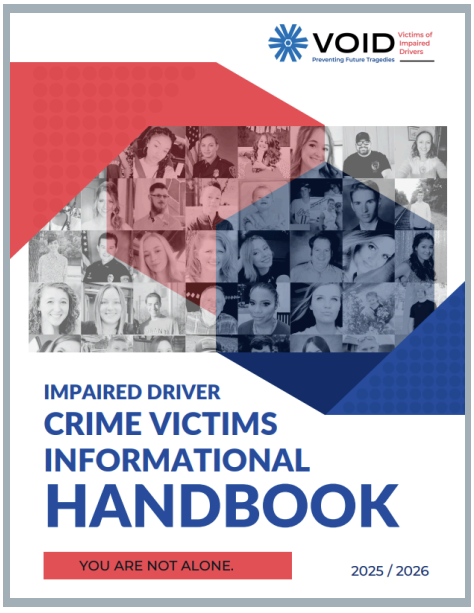
Sheriff (ret.) John Whetsel

Victims of Impaired Driving (VOID) was founded in Oklahoma in the summer of 2023 by families united through a shared tragedy—the loss of loved ones to impaired driving. Recognizing that these deaths are entirely preventable, the organization was established to provide a voice for victims and their families while advocating for meaningful reforms aimed at reducing impaired driving and saving lives.

Through a combination of advocacy, public education, legislative engagement, and community outreach, VOID works to honor the memory of those lost while raising awareness about the devastating consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

VOID has become a powerful force for change in Oklahoma. The organization's efforts have contributed to the advancement and passage of several significant pieces of legislation designed to strengthen impaired driving prevention and accountability. These measures include the DUI Bond Bill, Aggravated DUI Bill, Medical Marijuana Warning Label Bill, and Event Bartender License Bill, all of which took effect on November 1, 2025. Together, these laws represent important steps toward improving public safety, increasing awareness of impaired driving risks, and ensuring greater responsibility among those who choose to drive impaired. Learn more **HERE**.

VOID had a presence in over 13 different county court proceedings supporting 29 individual victims and their families in 2024, and continues to increase their support each year.



POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

NHTSA BANS SALE AND IMPORT OF DEADLY, DEFECTIVE CHINESE AIR BAG INFLATORS

The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced it is ***banning defective Chinese air bag inflators*** that have killed at least 10 people and caused serious injuries to two others in a dozen crashes. NHTSA's **investigation** concluded that these inflators pose a risk of serious injury or death to drivers and passengers. Instead of inflating the air bag in a crash to protect the driver, these inflators explode, sending large metal fragments into drivers' chests, necks, eyes and faces.

"Banning these illegal Chinese airbag parts responsible for 10 deaths is necessary to ensure the safety of Americans on our roads," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy. "Anyone caught importing or selling these defective, deadly inflators will be held accountable as we work with our law enforcement partners to restore safety on our roads."

NHTSA
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

All 12 crashes involving frontal driver air bag inflators marked with the identifier "DTN60DB" were likely illegally imported into the United States. Learn ***more***.

Who Is Potentially at Risk and What to Do?

You must review the vehicle's history report to look for:

- Air bag deployment history.
- Previous crashes or "total loss" events.
- Reported theft history.
- Repairs performed at non-certified service centers.



THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS A NATIONAL 0.05 BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION (BAC) LIMIT

The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) has released a resolution supporting a reduction of the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit from 0.08 to 0.05, citing the ongoing impact of impaired driving on communities nationwide. The association notes that alcohol-impaired driving remains a leading cause of preventable traffic fatalities, particularly in rural areas where longer emergency response times can increase crash severity. Drawing on research and international experience, the NSA believes a 0.05 BAC standard could help reduce impaired-driving crashes, injuries, and deaths while strengthening efforts to improve roadway safety.

The Future of DUI Prevention: What Section 24220 Means for New Vehicles

A major change to vehicle safety technology is on the horizon. Under Section 24220 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, signed into law on November 15, 2021, automakers will eventually be required to equip new passenger vehicles with built-in systems designed to detect impaired driving and prevent or restrict vehicle operation when impairment is identified.

Unlike ignition interlock devices, which are typically installed after a DUI conviction, these emerging technologies would come factory-installed as part of the vehicle itself. One leading concept, the Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety (DADSS), uses advanced sensors to measure alcohol levels through touch-based technology or by analyzing breath samples within the vehicle cabin.

To explore the legislation in more detail, read the bill or **learn more** about the technology currently under development.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

GENESEE COUNTY, MICHIGAN: PREHOSPITAL WHOLE BLOOD PROGRAM

Genesee County is taking a major step forward in emergency medical response with the launch of a **new prehospital whole blood program** led by the Genesee County Sheriff's Office Paramedic Division. Developed in partnership with American Red Cross, Hurley Medical Center, and the University of Michigan, the initiative brings lifesaving blood transfusions directly to trauma scenes for the first time in the county's history.

The program allows specially trained paramedic deputies to administer whole blood at the scene of critical emergencies, including serious vehicle crashes, gunshot wounds, and other traumatic injuries where severe blood loss can quickly become fatal. By providing transfusions before a patient reaches the hospital, first responders can begin stabilizing victims immediately, greatly improving the likelihood of survival during those critical first moments of care.



> "We know that life-saving blood when an individual is uncontrollably bleeding can help prevent death and our partnership to get a unit of blood onto the paramedics units and with our EMS allows us to save lives in the field before folks even get to the hospital," American Red Cross Michigan Region CEO Kelly King said. "As they're being transported we can get that lifesaving blood to them."
>
> https://www.ems1.com/whole-blood/mich-sheriffs-office-launches-whole-blood-program

To prepare for the program, deputies completed advanced medical training and worked alongside physicians and trauma specialists to establish the protocols and safety standards necessary for administering blood outside of a hospital setting. The planning process included coordination measures designed to balance lifesaving medical interventions with the preservation of evidence critical to impaired-driving investigations. The initiative reflects a growing effort among emergency response agencies nationwide to expand advanced medical capabilities in the field and improve outcomes for trauma patients.

WASHOE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE JOINS STATEWIDE CAMPAIGN ON IMPAIRED DRIVING

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office joined agencies across Nevada in the statewide "Joining Forces" impaired driving campaign, combining increased enforcement with public education efforts to promote safer roadways. From February 6–22, 2026, deputies conducted enhanced patrols targeting impaired and dangerous driving behaviors while encouraging motorists to plan ahead by using designated drivers, rideshare services, or public transportation. The campaign reinforced the message that impaired driving—whether involving alcohol, drugs, or both—remains a serious threat to public safety and that prevention and enforcement are key to reducing preventable crashes. Learn more about the campaign here.



Tools, Technology, and Training

LOW-COST PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ZONE CASE STUDY

A newly released pedestrian safety report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) highlights how communities across the country are improving roadway safety through practical, budget-conscious initiatives. The report, ***Low-Cost Pedestrian Safety Zone Case Study***, examines efforts in cities including Gainesville, Kalamazoo, and Saint Paul, where local leaders implemented affordable strategies aimed at reducing pedestrian injuries and fatalities.

The case study focuses on solutions that can be introduced quickly and funded within existing municipal budgets, including targeted education campaigns, enhanced traffic enforcement, and roadway engineering improvements. One example highlighted in the report is the Vision Zero framework, a strategy focused on reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries through safer roadway design, public education, and collaborative traffic safety efforts.



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATORS (AAMVA)

As document fraud and identity-related crimes continue to evolve, having the right training and tools is becoming increasingly important for frontline personnel. AAMVA developed its **Fraud Detection & Remediation (FDR)** program to help agencies strengthen their ability to recognize fraudulent documents, identify suspicious activity, and respond effectively during sensitive transactions and investigations.

Used by motor vehicle agencies, law enforcement organizations, federal partners, and private-sector entities, the program offers continually updated training focused on emerging fraud trends and real-world scenarios.

Agencies interested in expanding fraud awareness and investigative preparedness are encouraged to learn more about the available training resources and educational materials.

AAMVA American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators

TELEMATICS-ASSISTED VEHICLE INTERVENTION

Advancements in vehicle technology are creating new opportunities for law enforcement agencies to improve public safety and reduce the risks associated with high-speed pursuits. Through partnerships with vehicle manufacturers and telematics providers such as General Motors's OnStar, law enforcement officers can already access tools that help locate stolen vehicles, monitor vehicle movement, remotely slow a vehicle, and prevent it from restarting once safely stopped.

While some of these capabilities are currently used in limited situations, such as stolen vehicle assistance and remote ignition blocking, emerging technology could expand these options even further. Supporters say these systems may help reduce dangerous pursuits, improve coordinated response efforts, and provide law enforcement with safer alternatives for resolving incidents while protecting both deputies and the public.

EVENTS

NATIONAL DAY OF TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Representing NSA, Sheriff James Quattrone of Chautauqua County, New York, participated alongside Corporal Wesley Frost of the Fauquier County Sheriff's Office, Virginia, in the National Day of Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Responder Training at the U.S. Department of Transportation in Washington, D.C. The initiative was part of a nationwide effort led by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to improve roadway safety and reduce the risks associated with traffic incidents.

Improve roadway safety with **free** Traffic Incident Management (TIM) training. Designed for law enforcement, fire, EMS, towing and recovery, and transportation personnel, TIM training helps responders coordinate more effectively at crash scenes, enhancing safety, reducing congestion, and protecting both responders and the traveling public.

The National Sheriffs' Association is proud to support this lifesaving initiative. Learn more about these **free** training opportunities **here**.



FOURTH OF JULY: IF YOU FEEL DIFFERENT YOU DRIVE DIFFERENT

As families and friends gather to celebrate the Fourth of July, law enforcement agencies across the country are joining the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's **"If You Feel Different, You Drive Different"** campaign, running June 29 through July 5. The campaign serves as an important reminder that alcohol and drugs impact a driver's ability to safely operate a vehicle. With holiday travel and celebrations increasing during the week, agencies will be working to encourage safe choices and help keep roadways safe for everyone enjoying the holiday.



WHAT'S COMING UP?

2027
NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION
WINTER CONFERENCE
FEBRUARY 8-12, 2027

SHARE YOUR STORY!

If you have conducted, or are currently engaging in successful enforcement efforts, please let us know. Contact Sofie Roskin at sroskin@sheriffs.org to highlight your sheriff's office.