

## Drive alert and sober or plan a safe ride home

Ring in the New Year and celebrate safely this holiday season by driving alert and sober, or planning for a safe ride home. Ontario has some of the toughest distracted and impaired driving laws in Canada, but the Province has issued a reminder that everyone can do more to help keep the roads safe. If you are going to drink, plan to ride with a designated driver, take public transit or call a cab.

Even small amounts of alcohol, illegal drugs, and some prescription and over-the-counter medications can impair one's judgement. The safest choice when driving is not to drink at all.

As people celebrate with family and friends this holiday season, they should remember to never put themselves and others at risk by getting behind the wheel while impaired.

When you are driving, put down the phone and focus on the road.

According to the Office of the Chief Coroner, 39 per cent of drivers killed on Ontario's roads in 2013 had either drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol in their system.

Distracted driving is a leading cause of collisions on Ontario roads. According to 2013 collision statistics, one person is injured in a distracted driving collision every 30 minutes.

Ontario had the lowest impaired driving offence rate in Canada. In 2015, there were 111 offences per 100,000 population, which is 44.7 per cent lower than the national average of 201 offences per 100,000 population.

It takes time to get one's blood alcohol concentration back to zero after drinking. Coffee, food or physical exercise will not help one sober up faster.

?Even one impaired or distracted driver on our roads is one too many,? Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca observed.

?Impaired or distracted driving is completely unacceptable and I urge everyone to find safe alternate ways to get home this holiday season. Appoint a designated driver, take public transit, call a cab or stay overnight and please call 9-1-1 if you suspect an impaired driver is on our roads.?