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## Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection

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# DRUNK AND DRUGGED: STATE FORENSIC LAB WARNS THAT IMPAIRED DRIVERS ARE ALSO USING DANGEROUS DRUGS

MERIDEN – Scientists from the Connecticut Forensic Lab, along with Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut State Police, and the Hartford Police Department are warning about the danger of motorists under the influence of alcohol and multiple dangerous drugs.

“What stands out is not that this is simply alcohol combined with one drug. We are seeing multiple drugs used together, combined with alcohol,” said **Dr. Jessica Gleba, Director of Forensic Laboratory Operations** with DESPP’s Division of Scientific Services. “An alarming example is carfentanil, which is 100 times more potent than fentanyl. We now see carfentanil, often in combination with other dangerous drugs, in the samples we test.”

In coordination with Connecticut Department of Transportation and CT Highway Safety Office, the forensic lab has been testing all impaired driving cases for the presence of drugs since Oct. 1. The results have been startling. In 2025, 14% of cases tested for drugs had 10 or more drugs. Approximately 50% of cases in 2025 had 5 or more drugs detected.

“This critical data from our forensics lab highlights the need to promote safe and cautious driving. When you drive impaired, you put everyone at risk,” said **Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz**. “As we enjoy the holiday season, this data is a good reminder that we can all do more to take better care of each other – especially on our roads and highways. The best gift you can give yourself and your loved ones this year is safe driving.”

“We are pleased to stand with our partners at the Department of Transportation, as well as local law enforcement, to stand behind a clear message: if you drink, don’t drive. If you use drugs, do not get behind the wheel of a car,” said **DESPP Commissioner Ronnell A. Higgins**. “The work at the forensic lab is providing new insight into the extreme danger from impaired drivers.”

“Let me be clear, we will not tolerate drunk and drugged driving,” Higgins said. “We will have intense and targeted enforcement along Connecticut roadways this holiday season. If you drive while impaired we will stop you and we will arrest you.”

“When someone gets behind the wheel drunk or drugged, they are putting themselves, their passengers, and everyone around them at risk,” said **Col. Daniel Loughman, Commanding Officer of the Connecticut State Police**.

“We want everyone to enjoy the holidays, but we need you to do it responsibly. If you plan to drink, make a plan for how you will get home before you leave. Use a designated driver, call a ride service, or stay where you are. If you see emergency responders on the side of the road slow down and move over,” Loughman said.

“We appreciate our law enforcement partners for helping keep our roads safe,” said **CTDOT Highway Safety Office Director Joe Cristalli, Jr.** “CTDOT is committed to providing local and state law enforcement with the resources they need to increase patrols, deter impaired driving, and save lives. With the holidays underway, we urge everyone to plan ahead and designate a sober driver.”

“We see the consequences of impaired driving firsthand, and they are heartbreaking,” said **Hartford Police Deputy Chief Gabriel Laureano**. “No celebration is worth a life. This holiday season, we ask everyone to make smart choices, look out for one another, and keep our roads safe.”

Whenever you plan to go out, please remember:

- **Never drink and drive.** Even a single alcoholic beverage can impair your ability to drive. Designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.
- **Utilize taxis, rideshare programs, or public transit** if available.
- **If you see an impaired driver, call 9-1-1.**
- **Prevent friends from driving drunk.** If you know someone who is about to drive after drinking, take their keys and arrange a safe way for them to get home.