

Answers from Amy

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YOU BETTER WATCH OUT, I'M TELLING YOU WHY:

Cops are Cracking Down on Drunk Driving

The holiday season is right around the corner. As Americans prepare for festivities with family and friends, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Watch UR BAC program wants to remind all drivers that it's dangerous to drive after drinking. You have to choose your role before drinking begins: will you drink or will you drive? Remember, even if you only have a little bit to drink and think you're "okay to drive," you could still be over the legal limit.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agent Amy Kress reminds drivers that the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign runs from now until January 1, 2015.

Due to the increase in drunk-driving related fatalities around the holidays each year, law enforcement agencies will be out in force. According to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Texas DWI fatalities during the holiday season December 1-31, 2013, resulted in 86 fatalities. But not everyone dies in a crash. Many live with lifelong, debilitating injuries as a result of their own drunk driving or that of a complete stranger.

The consequences and costs are significant if you are caught driving while intoxicated, costing you \$17,000 or more, the loss of your driver license, higher insurance rates, and dozens of other unanticipated expenses.

Even a little holiday cheer can impair a person's driving. Plan ahead if you are going to drink alcohol. The message is out there, but it only works if you join our efforts this holiday season by pledging to give or be the gift of a sober driver. Find out how to pledge at soberrides.org. Other tips include:

I. Designate a non-drinking driver before festivities begin. Even one drink can impair your judgment.

II. If you have been drinking, do not drive. Phone a sober friend or family member, call a cab, or spend the night where you are.

III. Step up and step in – don't let friends drive if they've been drinking. Give someone a gift by being their sober, designated driver.

For information on free alcohol awareness programs available through the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Watch UR BAC program in College Station, go to www.watchurbac.tamu.edu or call 979-862-1911.

HOLIDAY FOOD SAFETY

Delicious food is often a special part of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other holiday events. Entertaining family and friends is fun, but it's important to keep food safety in mind.

Holiday meals and party foods are often served buffet style. This means that food remains on the table as guests come and go. Room temperatures support the growth of bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Here are some tips to keep buffet foods safe:

Keep hot foods hot. Chafing dishes may or may not keep foods at the necessary temperature — 140°F or above. Never leave hot foods out for more than 2 hours.

Put small quantities of food on the table. Replace them often from the heat source in the kitchen or from the refrigerator.

Discard leftovers. Any foods left from the buffet line should be discarded. Items still refrigerated or frozen, but not served, should be used within the recommended times.