

Advice from Experts Around the World

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What makes driving on holidays so dangerous?

“There are multiple reasons that the holidays are such a dangerous time of the year for drivers. Although the holidays are an amazing time for family get-togethers, it is also a stressful time. Because of this, there is a spike in aggressive driving and collisions.

In addition to this, there is an increase in traffic during the holidays. Finally, holiday functions that serve alcohol increase impaired or intoxicated driving.”

Why are some holidays more dangerous than others?

“Generally speaking, holidays increase the volume of traffic on our roads, which also increases the chances of being involved in a collision. However, holidays such as Memorial Day and Labor Day are usually celebrated with cookouts and all-day events, often accompanied by alcohol use. This can then lead to an increase in impaired or intoxicated driving during the holiday weekend.”

What are organizations in your area doing to prevent traffic deaths during the holidays?

“As a former police officer and deputy sheriff that worked in Bluffton and Beaufort County (SC), our local agencies increase traffic and DUI enforcement. The 911 Driving School Hilton Head uses social media accounts to post helpful driving tips and reminders while also teaching our young drivers the dangers of distracted and impaired driving.”

How do you think the COVID-19 pandemic has or will impact dangers on the roads during holidays?

“With COVID-19 restrictions lifted in many places, families will travel again to see the loved ones that they were not able to visit during the height of the pandemic, thus increasing the traffic volume. We could see our major highways and interstates become more congested, increasing traffic accidents.”

What are some steps people can take to remain safe on the roads during the holidays?

“While traveling, remember to slow down and be more alert, especially in heavy traffic. Try to reduce your distractions and limit your phone use to when the vehicle is parked. Do not drive tired; driving while fatigued can be as dangerous as distracted or impaired driving. Take breaks to stop and rest if you begin feeling sleepy or tired.”

What steps do you personally take to minimize danger while driving during the holidays?

“I tend to plan out our holiday road trips. We always fill up and pack the car the night before. This way, we are not rushing to try and leave. We also pack a cooler with drinks and snacks for the ride, just in case we get stuck for a long period of time.”

Do you have any personal stories about the dangers of holiday driving?

“An event that stands out is one Thanksgiving when we were returning home from the mountains and were traveling on I-40 in North Carolina. Traffic was not bad, but steady. After moving over to exit on to I-26, a driver sped around me, came up alongside my truck, and began acting as if he had a gun.

The driver had been speeding and weaving in and out of traffic, and although I did not cut him off, he was upset that I moved into his lane. Luckily, I was able to see that he did not have a gun, and I was able to get away from him safely.”

*David Murphy is the owner of the [911 Driving School](#).
He is a former police officer and deputy sheriff.*

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