



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Christmas Anti Drink Drive campaign update

A campaign to crack down on drink driving over the Christmas period has seen nearly **5,000 breath tests being administered** in North Wales in the first two weeks which began Monday 1st December. In the first two weeks of the month-long campaign, **45 arrests have been made** after drivers failed breath tests in roadside stop checks. That's compared to 67 arrests this time last year.

The launch took place at the Celtic Royal Hotel in Caernarfon on Thursday, 27th of November. Attended by Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom, Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economy and Transport Ieuan Wyn Jones and Angela and Derek Coulton, the parents of 20-year-old Amanda Coulton who was killed by a drink driver on the A547 road to Rhuddlan in January this year.

Out of those arrested during the campaign so far, **one in three (32%) were young drivers (17-25 years old).**

Chief Inspector Gary Ashton from the Operational Services Division said: *"While it's encouraging that we're having these results and taking more drink drivers off the roads, it's also worrying that motorists are continuing to ignore the drink drive message. Once again young drivers are over represented in our arrest figures and our enforcement activity is targeted towards this high risk group to prevent their involvement in a fatal or serious injury collision"*

During the 2007 Christmas Drink Drive campaign, 19,554 drivers were breathalysed on the roads of Wales and 587 of those tested positive.

Chief Inspector Ashton added: *"We are now approaching one of the busiest weekends of the year for festive celebrations. We want people to enjoy themselves - but to do so responsibly. Make a choice and stick to it - drink or drive. Don't drink and drive."*

Throughout last weekend a total of eleven people were arrested in the force's Western Division (which covers Anglesey and Gwynedd) on suspicion of driving with excess alcohol. Nine of those people have been charged and will be appearing before local courts and two have been released on police bail pending further enquiries.

Superintendent Mark Jones from the Western Division said: *"I find it amazing that people, who know the risk of their irresponsible behaviour, continue to put lives at risk by driving after consuming too much alcohol. We are in a period where people want to celebrate and enjoy themselves, but they must do so responsibly. It's not difficult for people to make travel arrangements beforehand."*

He added: *"We want everyone to be able to travel on the roads safely, and as such a large number of high profile operations will continue to be conducted in the area to deter those irresponsible people who continue to drink and drive. This is an attempt **to maximise the safety of the law abiding majority by focussing on the criminal minority** - have a safe and happy Christmas."*

If you know of someone who regularly drinks and drives, or if you suspect someone who is behind the wheel whilst under the influence of alcohol, contact North Wales Police on 0845 607 1001 (Welsh line) or 0845 607 1002 (English line).

Notes:

- If you drive at twice the legal alcohol limit you are at least 30 times more likely to cause a road crash than a driver who hasn't been drinking. If you plan to drive the only safe option is not to drink.
- Drivers' reaction times and motoring skills deteriorate after even a small amount of alcohol - and get worse with increased alcohol consumption.
- The risk of involvement in a collision rises significantly once the blood alcohol level rises above 50mg per 100ml of blood.

The Law ... If you are convicted for a drink driving offence you will:

- Have a criminal record
- Lose your licence for a minimum of one year
- You may go to prison for up to six months
- You may have to pay a fine of up to £5,000
- Have difficulty hiring a car within ten years of your conviction

If you are convicted of causing death by careless driving while under the influence of drink you face:

- Up to 14 years in prison
- An unlimited fine
- A minimum two-year driving ban

Other consequences:

- Face exceptionally high insurance costs once you get your licence back
- You may lose your job (15 per cent of those convicted do)
- Legal expenses
- Loss of personal transport and increased travel expenses
- Living with your conscience

And worst of all living with the knowledge that your irresponsibility has caused death, injury or severe distress to innocent people.

Do you know the legal limit for alcohol when driving?

• 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood, or 35 micrograms of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath, if a breath test is used. However, this can't be measured in how many units a person has drunk because everyone deals with alcohol at different rates. To be on the safe side, people who plan to drive should not drink any alcohol

The PPP comments ...This campaign has admirable objectives and we totally support **deterrence and prevention of crime and road casualties** BUT we have to question the targeting efficiency. Mark Jones says *This is an attempt to maximise the safety of the law abiding majority by focussing on the criminal minority*. The figures for last year show that 97% of those breathalysed were innocent and only 3% failed. This year so far, only 1% have failed. This hardly fits the term '*focussing*'. Surely modern intelligent led policing could do better.