

CHP will increase enforcement for Thanksgiving holiday

Contributed by Editor
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LAKE COUNTY – The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is giving thanks this holiday season for drivers who play by the rules and help make the state's roads a safer place.

“Our message is simple … drive safe, drive sober and buckle up,” said Lt. Dane Hayward, Commander of the Clear Lake Area CHP office.

To emphasize safety on the roadways, the CHP has scheduled another Maximum Enforcement Period during the Thanksgiving holiday, according to CHP Officer Adam Garcia.

The official Thanksgiving holiday driving period begins Wednesday, Nov. 21 at 6 p.m. and continues through Sunday, Nov. 25. At the same time, the CHP will implement the Maximum Enforcement Period and put every available officer on the road.

Joining the thousands of CHP officers out on the road Thanksgiving week are millions of Californians, and crowded highways can often lead to frustrating moments at the wheel, CHP reported.

“Be prepared for traffic tie-ups, especially on the Wednesday before or the Sunday after Thanksgiving,” said Lt. Hayward.

In addition to busy roadways, inclement weather is another factor motorists may have to contend with. Rain, fog, wind and snow have been known to create not only frustrating, but hazardous conditions for drivers.

“Many crashes are caused by driving too fast for current conditions,” added Lt. Hayward.

Last year, during the Thanksgiving MEP, 42 people died in 4,768 collisions that occurred in California. More than half of the vehicle occupants killed were not wearing their seat belt.

Another sobering statistic: 1,670 people were arrested by CHP officers for driving under the influence last year over the Thanksgiving holiday; a nearly 10 percent increase from the same time period the previous year.

The Thanksgiving Maximum Enforcement Period also is an Operation CARE (Combined Accident Reduction Effort) holiday, Garcia reported.

Operation CARE is a joint program of the nation's highway patrols that promotes safe driving on interstate highways during holiday periods, according to Garcia. CARE highways in California include Interstates 80, 40, 15 (San Bernardino to the Nevada border) and 5 (Bakersfield north to the Oregon line).

The Thanksgiving Maximum Enforcement Period will be one of the year's last. Garcia said every year CHP conducts the maximum enforcement operations on New Year's, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

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