**2018 DRUG-IMPAIRED DRIVING AWARENESS**

**SOCIAL NORMING CAMPAIGN**

**SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Date]**

**CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, Email Address]**

**Note: Before filling in the names of the organization and organization spokesperson, you MUST contact them for permission to use their names in this press release. Also, you must get their approval for the language of their quotations, and any changes or additions they may require. Only after this is done should you issue the press release.**

**Drug-Impaired Driving Is Dangerous Driving:**

***If You Feel Different***

***You Drive Different***

**[City, State]**—Like drunk driving, drug-impaired driving is impaired driving, which means it is dangerous and illegal in all 50 States, Puerto Rico, and Washington, DC. Whether the drug is obtained legally or illegally, drug-impaired driving poses a threat to the driver, vehicle passengers, and other road users. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is working closely with **[State Organization/Community Organization/Local Law Enforcement Organization]** to spread the word about the dangers of drug-impaired driving and to remind all drivers: If you are impaired by drugs and thinking about driving, pass your key on to a sober driver. The message is clear: *If You Feel Different, You Drive Different.*

It is never okay to drive when impaired. This not only means refraining from drunk driving, but also from drug-impaired driving. NHTSA’s [2013/14 National Roadside Survey of Alcohol and Drug Use by Drivers](http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/pdf/812118-Roadside_Survey_2014.pdf) found that nearly one in four weekend drivers tested positive for at least one drug that could impair their driving skills and their ability to drive safely. If you think driving while high won’t affect you, you are wrong: It has been proven that Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)—the chemical responsible for most of marijuana’s psychological effects—slows reaction times, impairs cognitive performance, and makes it more difficult for drivers to keep a steady position in their lane. The bottom line is this: It doesn’t matter what term is used, if a person is high, stoned, wasted, or drunk, he or she is impaired. Driving while impaired by any substance is illegal and can be deadly to the driver and other road users. It’s that simple.

“Drug-impaired driving is a safety issue for drivers and for **[Law Enforcement Officers]**,” said **[Local Law Enforcement Official/Local Official]**. “It is our hope that people will think twice before driving while impaired by drugs. It is deadly for the driver, but also for his or her passengers, and for other people on the streets. If you are taking any type of drug, prescription, over-the-counter or illegal, pass your keys to a sober driver. Remember: A DUI is for more than just alcohol. *If You Feel Different, You Drive Different*.”

Violating **[State]**’s drug-impaired driving laws can be costly. **[Insert State law specifics/fines]**.

“Vehicle crashes are happening as a result of drug-impaired driving,” **said [Local Law Enforcement Official/Local Official]**. “Studies show that many drugs have the potential to negatively affect driving skills, putting all road users at increased risk. If you are impaired by any substance, don’t drive.”

**Medical Repercussions**

New medication or increased dosages can affect people differently. If you are taking a new prescription drug or a higher dose of a current prescription drug, do not drive until you know what effect it has on your judgement, coordination, and reaction time. Any effect could impair your driving ability. Even if a doctor writes a new prescription or increases a current dosage, be sure to discuss with the doctor how the drug might affect your driving abilities and whether it is safe to drive while taking the medication. You can also ask the pharmacist when you pick up your medication. Always report all medications you are taking to the doctor (prescription, over-the-counter, and illegal) so the doctor may accurately provide counsel on whether it is safe to drive while taking the medication. Certain medications may not impair you on their own, but if taken with a second medication or with alcohol, they may cause impairment. Even something as simple as cold medication or an over-the-counter sleep aid could impair driving. If it does, you will be arrested for a DUI. Any form of impaired driving is illegal. Remember: *If You Feel Different, You Drive Different*.

**Financial Impacts**

Violating State DUI laws includes driving under the influence of any impairing substance, including prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, illegal drugs and alcohol. Remember, any impairment, including drugs, is illegal if you are operating a vehicle. On average, a DUI can set you back $10,000 in attorney fees, fines, court costs, lost time at work, higher insurance rates, car towing and repairs, and more. The financial impact from impaired driving crashes is devastating. If you are driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol, you could be arrested for a DUI. Do not drive.

**Play It Safe**

Remember these safety tips as you drive, and spread the message to your friends and family members:

* If a driver has ingested an impairing substance, such as prescription drugs, sleep medication, marijuana, or any form of illegal drug, he or she should not drive. Passengers should never ride with an impaired driver. If you think a driver may be impaired, do not get in the car with them.
* If you are drug-impaired, pass the key to a sober driver who can safely drive you to your final destination. Like drunk driving, it is essential that drug-impaired drivers refrain from driving a vehicle. It is never okay to drive while impaired by any substance.
* Have a friend who is about to drive while impaired by drugs? Take the keys away and arrange to get them home safely. Don’t worry about offending someone—they’ll thank you later.
* Download NHTSA’s SaferRide mobile app, available on Google Play for Android devices: (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.nhtsa.SaferRide&hl=en), and Apple’s iTunes Store for iOS devices: (https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/saferride/id950774008?mt=8). SaferRide allows users to call a taxi or a predetermined friend, and identifies the user’s location so he or she can be picked up.
* Use your community’s sober ride program **[Insert your local sober ride program specifics here]**.
* If you see an impaired driver on the road, contact **[Local Law Enforcement]**.

For more information, visit [www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov](http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov).

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