

December 10, 2012

Sally Ellertson  
Public Information Officer  
141 West Renfro  
Burleson, Texas 76028-4261  
817-426-9622  
F: 817-426-9390  
[sellertson@burlesontx.com](mailto:sellertson@burlesontx.com)  
[www.burlesontx.com](http://www.burlesontx.com)

Give the gift of a sober ride. That's the message that the Texas Department of Transportation and law enforcement agencies statewide are stressing this holiday season.

The campaign is called Holiday P.A.S.S. (Person Appointed to Stay Sober). It encourages Texans to give the gift of a sober ride and make it easier for sober drivers to enjoy the festivities without drinking alcohol.

Holiday drinking and driving poses a serious threat for all holiday travelers on the road. During last year's holiday season (Dec. 1, 2011, through Jan. 1, 2012) there were 2,462 alcohol-related traffic crashes in Texas, resulting in 842 serious injuries and 78 fatalities. During that same timeframe in Burleson, there were two vehicle crashes involving intoxication with no reported injuries, one crash involving a reported injury, and one crash involving two fatalities.

Brett Allen Burgess, 31, of Burleson and Chelsea Junge, 26, of Joshua died Dec. 31, 2011, when the silver four-door Volkswagen Burgess was driving crashed at 3:22 a.m. in the 900 block of South Burleson Boulevard. Both were ejected from the vehicle when Burgess lost control of the VW. The car went off the road, then went airborne and rolled. A second passenger survived the crash.

During the upcoming holiday season, law enforcement officers throughout the state, including Burleson, will work to crack down on drunk driving.

"We will be stepping up enforcement efforts to keep intoxicated drivers off the road and keep the public safe," Burleson Police Commander Chris Havens said. "We encourage the public to not drink and drive and to arrange to have a designated driver before going out. We also encourage the public to report an intoxicated person before that individual leaves the business or the party and gets behind the wheel."

Between Dec. 5 and Dec. 9 of this year, Burleson Police officers made seven DWI arrests. Of the seven, one driver was a second offender, one had an open container of alcohol in the vehicle at the time of the arrest, and one was a minor.

The Burleson Police Department has operated with the no-refusal policy since May 2008. If a driver suspected of driving while intoxicated in Burleson refuses to

submit to an intoxilyzer test, that driver will be headed to the hospital to have blood drawn. Previously, Burluson requested search warrants for DWI breath test refusals when the suspected driver had a previous conviction for DWI or was involved in a traffic accident while allegedly driving while intoxicated. The department's current policy allows officers to seek warrants for every DWI breath test refusal.

To assist TxDOT in spreading the Holiday P.A.S.S. life-saving message, the Texas Hospitality Association is distributing customizable sober driver "gift certificates" and other materials in stores across the state where alcohol is sold. Additionally, award-winning mixologist, Rob Pate, owner of restaurants Peche' and Cherry Street in Austin, is creating three signature non-alcoholic drinks for the holidays that will be promoted for holiday parties.

Current law in Texas says a person is legally intoxicated with a .08 BAC (blood or breath alcohol concentration). A person is also intoxicated if impaired due to alcohol or other drugs, regardless of the BAC. And, whether you are the driver or the passenger, you can be fined up to \$500 for having an open alcohol container in a vehicle. If you refuse to take a blood or breath test, your driver's license will be automatically suspended for 180 days.

Drivers will be charged with child endangerment for driving while intoxicated if they have a passenger in the vehicle who is younger than 15 years old. The punishment, if convicted, can include a fine of up to \$10,000, up to two years in a state jail, and loss of your license for 180 days.

If you are a first offender and you are convicted of DWI, the punishment can include a fine of up to \$2,000, three days to 180 days in jail, loss of driver's license for up to a year and an annual fee of \$1,000 or \$2,000 for three years to retain a driver's license.

Second offenders who are convicted can face a punishment of a fine of up to \$4,000, one month to a year in jail, loss of driver's license for up to two years, and an annual fee of \$1,000, \$1,500 or \$2,000 for three years to retain a driver's license.

And, if you are a three-time offender and are convicted of DWI, the punishment can include a \$10,000 fine, two to 10 years in prison, loss of driver's license for up to two years and an annual fee of \$1,000, \$1,500, or \$2,000 for three years to retain a driver's license. After two or more DWI convictions in five years, a driver must install a special ignition switch that prevents your vehicle from being operated if you've been drinking.

For tips on planning ahead for sober drivers and safe rides after holiday festivities, visit the Holiday P.A.S.S. Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/txdot](http://www.facebook.com/txdot) or the Pinterest page at [www.pinterest.com/holidaypass](http://www.pinterest.com/holidaypass). Recipes for original non-alcoholic drinks are included.