



NEWS

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Thirteen States Make Dubious *Fatal Fifteen* List for Two Years Straight

Safety Partners Introduce Free Life-Saving Holiday Gift for Parents/Teen Drivers

For Immediate Release

Chicago, IL (11/28/05) – The physician-led traffic safety advocacy group called End Needless Death on Our Roadways (END), and the National Safety Council today announced their annual list of the fifteen deadliest states in the country for impaired driving and reported that thirteen states have made the dubious list for two years straight. The *Fatal Fifteen* are states in which 41 percent or more of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related. The *Fatal Fifteen* were announced at John H. Stroger Hospital of Cook County, as motorists begin the busy and fatal winter holiday driving season.

The announcement came as the two groups, and representatives from Discount Tire Company, introduced a life-saving holiday gift available free of charge to parents with teen drivers called *Give Your Parents the Only Gift They Want This Holiday...You, Safely Home*.

“Motorists are facing an epidemic of death on our roadways, and tragically many of these fatalities and serious injuries could have been prevented,” according to Dr. Andrea Barthwell, Co-Chairperson of END and Chief Medical Officer of Timberline Knolls, an adolescent girls treatment facility. “While the holiday season is a time for excitement, celebration and family, it is also a time of impaired driving and senseless death and injury,” continued Barthwell.

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“We are disappointed to report that thirteen states on the *Fatal Fifteen* list have had the dubious distinction of making the list for two years straight. We urge leaders in these states and around the country to dedicate themselves to exploring new and innovative strategies for addressing impaired and other dangerous driving behaviors,” she added. “The physicians and other healthcare provider members of END are committed to working with the states and other traffic safety advocates by providing our leadership, expertise and knowledge in addressing and preventing dangerous driving behaviors,” Barthwell continued.

The *Fatal Fifteen* states in rank order are Rhode Island, Puerto Rico, Montana, Texas, Louisiana, Hawaii, Wisconsin, Illinois, Maryland, South Carolina, Washington, South Dakota, Connecticut, Oregon, Massachusetts, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania. States making the list for two years straight are Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Montana, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Washington D.C., and Wisconsin. In addition, six states that have seen an increase and are near the *Fatal Fifteen* threshold were placed on a watch list. They are Arkansas, North Dakota, California, Missouri, New York, and New Mexico.

Statistics show that last year, nearly 17,000 motorists were killed nationwide in alcohol-related traffic crashes. Nearly 6,000 of those fatalities occurred in the *Fatal Fifteen*. Additionally, over 2,000 teens between the ages of 16 and 21 were killed last year in alcohol-related crashes nationwide.

“Statistics, however, do not begin to tell the story of the real pain and destruction caused by impaired drivers,” according to Dr. Thomas Esposito, Co –Chairperson of END and Director of Loyola University Medical Center’s Injury Analysis and Prevention Program. “Physicians and other health care workers treat both impaired drivers and their victims at roadside crash scenes and in hospital emergency rooms. Let me tell you, nothing is as gut-wrenching as telling a parent that their young son or daughter is never coming home,” he added.

“While the effects of stricter impaired driving laws and a general change in public attitude has lowered the number of impaired driving deaths over the years, the reduction in the death rate has reached a plateau. Unfortunately, the levels are still unacceptably high,” Esposito continued.

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“That is why the physicians of END have partnered with Discount Tire Company and the National Safety Council to develop a new tool - a gift that creates a foundation on which teen drivers can build as they grow into older, more experienced drivers,” Esposito said.

“The gift called *Give Your Parents the Only Gift They Want This Holiday...You, Safely Home*, is a comprehensive, teen-driver contract created to help keep young drivers safe throughout their early driving experience and beyond,” according to Roger Fournier, Regional Vice President for Discount Tire Company. “It is designed in hopes that parents and teen drivers will learn together practical steps that can be applied to a lifetime of safe driving,” he continued.

“*Give Your Parents the Only Gift They Want This Holiday...You, Safely Home* addresses the important issues a parent should discuss with a young driver including impaired driving, safety belt use, passenger restrictions, curfew and vehicle equipment,” Fournier said. *Give Your Parents the Only Gift They Want This Holiday...You, Safely Home* can be found at all Discount Tire Company stores in Illinois or online at www.EndNeedlessDeath.org.

Give Your Parents the Only Gift They Want This Holiday...You, Safely Home was based on a family guide to teen driver safety developed by the National Safety Council called a *Family Guide for Teen Drivers*. “It is critical that teens understand the inherent risks of drinking and driving and other risky driving behaviors. *Family Guide* and *Give Your Parents the Only Gift They Want This Holiday...You, Safely Home* will help families understand and manage the journey teens will travel from beginner to independent driver,” said Alan C. McMillan, President and CEO of the National Safety Council.

“It is our goal to reduce the level of teen traffic fatalities and minimize the anxieties and uncertainties parents of new drivers feel by providing both teens and their parents with specific actions that have been shown to curb the risks for teen drivers,” McMillan said.

Families that complete the contract and register at END’s website will receive a \$25 coupon good towards their next tire purchase at Discount Tire Company and a free copy of *Family Guide for Teen Drivers*.

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“The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration applauds the efforts of the Coalition to End Needless Death on Our Roadways, the National Safety Council and Discount Tire Company to increase awareness and make our roads safer during the holiday season and every day,” according to Don McNamara, Great Lakes Regional Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

“Too many people still don’t understand that alcohol, drugs and driving don’t mix. Impaired driving is no accident – nor is it a victimless crime,” McNamara said. “Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is not worth the risk. The consequences are serious and real,” he concluded.

The Fifty States Plus D.C. and Puerto Rico, Ranked By Percentage

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|------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| <i>Rhode Island</i> | 50.60% | <i>Nevada</i> | 38.48% |
| <i>Puerto Rico</i> | 50.20% | <i>Alabama</i> | 38.30% |
| <i>Montana</i> | 46.29% | <i>Ohio</i> | 38.26% |
| <i>Texas</i> | 45.83% | <i>Delaware</i> | 38.06% |
| <i>Louisiana</i> | 45.80% | <i>Mississippi</i> | 37.89% |
| <i>Hawaii</i> | 45.77% | <i>Arizona</i> | 37.83% |
| <i>Wisconsin</i> | 45.20% | <i>Florida</i> | 37.67% |
| <i>Illinois</i> | 44.54% | <i>Michigan</i> | 37.10% |
| <i>Maryland</i> | 44.48% | <i>New Jersey</i> | 36.94% |
| <i>South Carolina</i> | 44.36% | <i>Nebraska</i> | 36.22% |
| <i>Washington</i> | 43.69% | <i>Maine</i> | 36.08% |
| <i>South Dakota</i> | 43.65% | <i>Wyoming</i> | 35.98% |
| <i>Connecticut</i> | 43.64% | <i>Oklahoma</i> | 35.92% |
| <i>Oregon</i> | 43.64% | <i>Idaho</i> | 35.77% |
| <i>Massachusetts</i> | 42.65% | <i>North Carolina</i> | 35.52% |
| <i>Washington D.C.</i> | 41.86% | <i>New Hampshire</i> | 34.50% |
| <i>Pennsylvania</i> | 41.21% | <i>West Virginia</i> | 33.09% |
| <i>New Mexico</i> | 40.50% | <i>Vermont</i> | 32.65% |
| <i>Tennessee</i> | 40.30% | <i>Minnesota</i> | 32.45% |
| <i>California</i> | 39.88% | <i>Georgia</i> | 32.13% |
| <i>Missouri</i> | 39.73% | <i>Kansas</i> | 32.10% |
| <i>New York</i> | 39.32% | <i>Kentucky</i> | 31.95% |
| <i>Arkansas</i> | 39.20% | <i>Indiana</i> | 31.57% |
| <i>North Dakota</i> | 39.00% | <i>Alaska</i> | 30.69% |
| <i>Colorado</i> | 38.95% | <i>Iowa</i> | 28.21% |
| <i>Virginia</i> | 38.81% | <i>Utah</i> | 24.32% |

****2004 Data from NHTSA’s Fatality Analysis Reporting System***

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