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Buckle up: KDOT, KHP and KTA remind motorists to put safety first for Thanksgiving celebrations

With Thanksgiving weekend being one of the busiest travel times of the year, the Kansas Department of Transportation, Kansas Highway Patrol and Kansas Turnpike Authority remind travelers to buckle up to help make it to the table for holiday celebrations.

During the last five Thanksgiving holiday weekends, 22 people have lost their lives in Kansas traffic crashes, according to KDOT statistics.

“Seat belts reduce serious crash-related injuries and deaths by nearly 50 percent,” said KDOT Transportation Secretary Calvin Reed. “Make sure all your passengers are buckled up before you leave the driveway.”

Law enforcement officers across the state will have an increased presence over the holiday period and will focus on overall traffic safety.

“The Kansas Highway Patrol, along with law enforcement agencies across the state, will be on roadways enforcing Kansas’ traffic and occupant protection laws,” said KHP Superintendent Colonel Erik Smith. “Remember, one of the safest choices drivers and passengers can make is to buckle up. Seat belts are the best defense against impaired, aggressive and distracted drivers. We want everyone to arrive at their destinations safely. Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time.”

The KTA is also preparing for increased traffic during the Thanksgiving holiday.

“With the change to cashless tolling on the Kansas Turnpike, all traffic will keep moving rather than stopping at a toll booth this holiday season, which helps improve safety,” said KTA CEO Steve Hewitt. “Drivers will pay tolls using a compatible transponder, like KTAG, or via a mailed bill. Learn more at DriveKS.com.”

Before traveling, KDOT, KHP and KTA remind motorists to check the vehicle's tires and fluid levels and have a basic winter travel kit handy in case of emergency. Items that should be included are blankets, bottled water, non-perishable food, cell phone charger, ice scraper, jumper cables, flashlight/batteries and a first-aid kit.

For the latest updates on road closures and conditions, visit KanDrive.gov, call 511 in Kansas or 866-511-5368 outside Kansas. Travelers who need assistance on the highway can dial *47 for the KHP or *582 while on the KTA. If it's an emergency, call 911.

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