



ILLINOIS STATE POLICE

NEWS RELEASE

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Illinois State Police Reminds Teens to Stay Safe While Celebrating Homecoming Events

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois State Police (ISP) reminds teens and their families to enjoy homecoming celebrations responsibly this year because the choices made today can have lasting consequences.

In July 2026, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) published its [Young Driver Traffic Safety Fact Sheet](#), which showed young people (15-20 years old) accounted for 9% of all drivers involved in a fatal traffic crash. The Fact Sheet also showed 53% of young drivers killed were not wearing a seatbelt and 29% had alcohol in their system. In Illinois, the leading contributing causes of major injury and fatal crashes are commonly referred to as “fatal four” violations - impaired driving, speeding, distracted driving, and improper seatbelt usage.

“ISP is doing its part to help prevent tragedies this homecoming season through increased traffic enforcement and patrols, but also through safety education,” said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly. “We encourage parents and guardians to discuss the dangers of alcohol and drug use with their children, including not getting in a car with a driver who has been consuming drugs or alcohol.”

Illinois is a zero-tolerance state when it comes to underage drinking – it is illegal for any person under the age of 21 to possess or consume any amount of an alcoholic beverage. Violators may be cited, fined, or arrested, and vehicles will be towed.

In addition to staying sober, young drivers should follow the speed limit, wear their seatbelts (even in the backseat), and avoid phone use and other distractions while driving. Illinois law prohibits cellphone usage for young drivers under age 19, including a hands-free device, except to call law enforcement or emergency services.

The ISP Safety Education Unit offers a wide variety of free educational programs for schools and community groups throughout Illinois. For more information on the programs offered, visit <https://isp.illinois.gov/TrafficSafety/SafetyEducation> or email ISP.Safety.education@illinois.gov.

Cheer for your team and have fun at the big dance, but do so responsibly and get home safely.

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