

**Contact:** Tim Wyatt, Police Sergeant  
Roanoke County Police Department  
540-777-8649  
[twyatt@roanokecountyva.gov](mailto:twyatt@roanokecountyva.gov)

**Date:** 05/27/16

## **Roanoke County Police Department** *Keeping Our Roads Safe This Memorial Day Weekend*

(Roanoke County, VA) - (May 27, 2016) The Roanoke County Police Department has planned a number of enforcement efforts to promote safe driving during the Memorial Day weekend. High visibility enforcement including sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols will be deployed in an attempt to keep everyone safe on the roadways in Roanoke County. Roanoke County Police will be joining the efforts of other law enforcement agencies throughout Central and Southwestern Virginia during this holiday weekend.

Because the holiday falls during the National 'Click It or Ticket' enforcement mobilization, there will be a strong emphasis on occupant protection violations. There were 310 unrestrained fatalities in Virginia last year, which represents 41 percent of the total traffic fatalities, and 71 were recorded in the first three months of this year. The Roanoke County Police Department enforces Virginia's occupant protection laws year round, but there will be enhanced enforcement during the Memorial Day weekend. We don't want to issue ticket, but if you are stopped and not wearing your seat belt; you will get a ticket. Seat belts are the best protection if you are involved in a crash.

If your plans for celebrating the Memorial Day weekend this year involve alcohol, the Roanoke County Police Department has some advice for you: don't drink and drive. We will be utilizing saturation patrols and checkpoints to crack down on drunk drivers and keep the streets safe for everyone. In 2015, there were 191 alcohol-related crashes in the Roanoke Valley throughout the year resulting in eight deaths and 99 persons injured. These needless deaths and injuries involving impaired drivers are unacceptable and call for enhanced enforcement.

The Roanoke County Police Department will be utilizing the 'No Refusal' program from May 27th through May 30th in an effort to crack down on drinking and driving during the Memorial Day celebration. The 'No Refusal' program simply means that if a driver refuses to submit to a breath test after being arrested for driving under the influence then the officer will apply for a search warrant with the Magistrate. If the Magistrate is satisfied with the probable cause for the arrest, a search warrant will be issued and medical staff at the Sheriff's Office will draw a blood sample, which will be submitted to the Department of Forensic Science for a toxicology test.

The 'No Refusal' program not only gives prosecutors critical evidence needed to successfully prosecute a DUI offense when a driver refuses to submit to a breath test, but also sends a clear message that impaired driving is not acceptable on the roads in Roanoke County. The Roanoke County Police Department will utilize all legal means to insure that impaired drivers are held accountable for such a potentially deadly offense during the Memorial Day celebration. No matter how you plan to get home, remember: Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.

Also, keep an eye out for pedestrians who have had too much to drink; walking while intoxicated can also be deadly. The lack of attention and coordination of a drunk pedestrian puts them at risk of getting hit by a vehicle; a fact seen too often in the Roanoke Valley.

Page2

The Roanoke County Police Department has a simple, but clear message on staying safe behind the wheel this holiday weekend: slow down, wear your seat belt, minimize distractions, and never drive impaired by alcohol and/or drugs. The Memorial Day weekend typically includes an increase in the number of drivers sharing the roadways throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Please do your part by taking the necessary precautions before and while driving to help us keep everyone safe.

# # #