

Illinois State Police Reminds Teens to Stay Safe When Hitting the Road for Prom and Graduation

by Illinois State Police
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SPRINGFIELD – Illinois State Police (ISP) officials are reminding teens statewide to celebrate prom and the upcoming graduation season responsibly. The choices you make today can have lasting consequences.

Last year, the Illinois Department of Transportation reported that over 840 high-school-aged teens, 15-18 years old, were injured in crashes during the prom and graduation

season, April 16 to May 31. The leading causes of major injury and fatal crashes nationwide are known in Illinois as the “fatal four” violations: speeding, distracted driving, improper seatbelt usage, and impaired driving.

ISP reminds teen drivers that every choice made behind the wheel has a consequence. Unlike video games, there is no pause or reset button when a dangerous situation occurs. Drivers need to follow the speed limit, wear their seatbelts, avoid distractions, and drive sober. The rules of the road are not there to restrict drivers, but to save lives. 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. Following these laws will help ensure teen drivers make it home safely. P.R.O.M = Please Return On Monday.

“No parent or guardian wants a knock on their door from one of our officers telling them their child has been injured or killed in a crash,” said ISP Division of Patrol Colonel Chris Owen. “These are supposed to be happy moments in their lives. ISP is doing its part to help prevent tragedies through patrols and education, but teens need to do their part and make smart, safe decisions.”

In a continued effort to reduce crashes on the interstates, especially during the prom and graduation season, ISP will conduct high-visibility patrols across the state, enforcing the “fatal four” and other violations. In addition to increased patrols and safety messaging, ISP officers are participating in six different mock-crash presentations over the next 10 days to highlight the dangers and realities of impaired and distracted driving. These full-scale operations include crashed car scenarios with student actors and real first responders from area fire and police departments. The goal is to help teen drivers see the consequences of risky driving behaviors.

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.