

Don't put drugs on the driving seat!

This Christmas Suffolk Police is supporting THINK!'s new campaign highlighting the impact drug driving can have on your night, your life and your future.

Between 2014 and 2023, there was a 70% increase in driver fatalities where drugs were a factor. Around 90% of drivers impaired by drugs in collisions are men, putting them at a higher risk.

Officers will be conducting roadside drug tests across the county this month. It is important to remember that drugs stay in your system longer than you think. It could be days later and you will still fail a police drug test. You may feel fine but your focus and judgement is affected.

Although we are specifically highlighting the effects of drug driving, we continue to work to eliminate anyone driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Roads policing officers will be breathalysing every single driver they stop during the campaign.

The penalties for drug driving are the same as for drink driving. If you are convicted, you could face:

- a minimum 12-month driving ban
- a criminal record
- an unlimited fine
- up to 6 months in prison
- an endorsement on your driving license for 11 years

The maximum penalty for causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drugs or drink is life in prison, with a minimum driving ban of five years.

The consequences of driving under the influence are not only legal. Losing your licence has a huge impact on your life. If you drive for work, you could lose your job, your car insurance costs will increase and you could have trouble entering other countries such as the USA.

Suffolk's emergency services and Roadsafes partners joined together on Friday last week to launch the campaign at Ipswich East Fire Station.

Inspector Byron Hearsom, of the joint Roads and Armed Policing team said: "32% of young men think it is ok to drive after taking drugs if you feel fine – it is my hope that this campaign explains exactly why that is not the case.

"Our annual message does not change – do not drive under the influence. You have a responsibility to keep yourself and other road users safe. Do not put their lives at risk, it is not only your Christmas you could be ruining."

Tim Passmore, Suffolk's Police & Crime Commissioner, said: "It absolutely amazes me that despite the obvious dangers, too many drivers still take to the road under the influence of drink or drugs.

"It is particularly concerning to see the increase of drug driving over the years and that it is a predominantly male problem – sadly this suggests these well-rehearsed safety messages are just not being heeded, I find this unbelievable.

"All drivers need to understand that drug driving risks their lives, and the lives of others. It is grossly irresponsible and selfish. I really hope this campaign, and the increased focus by our roads policing team, makes people think twice."

Henry Griffin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer at Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, said: "Every time someone drives under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they increase the risk of a serious collision that could require an emergency response.

"Our crews see first-hand the devastating consequences these choices have—not just for drivers, but for passengers, families, and other road users. This Christmas, please think before you drive. Stay sober, stay safe, and help us prevent tragedies on Suffolk's roads."

We understand that you may be close to someone who regularly gets behind the wheel under the influence of drugs or alcohol and this can make it difficult to speak to police.

In Suffolk, you can report drink and drug driving anonymously by calling Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or online [here](#).

In an emergency, always call 999.