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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

Message from MTA Bridges and Tunnels: Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season-Don't Drive While Intoxicated!

December is "National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month" and as the holiday season kicks into full festive mode, MTA Bridges and Tunnels wants to remind its customers not to operate a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), every day 36 people in the United States die and approximately 700 more are injured in auto crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. Nearly one third of all traffic-related deaths are linked to drivers who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Bridges and Tunnel Officers, Sergeants and Lieutenants take a hard line when it comes to motorists driving while intoxicated (DWI). "Ensuring the safety of our customers as they cross our facilities is imperative, and we will stop and check any driver on our property who raises the slightest suspicion of DWI," according to the agency's Chief of Special Operations, James Fortunato.

The law enforcement effort appears to be working effectively, as evidenced in the decline of arrests over the past three years. Thus far in 2008 there have been 409 DWI arrests at the bridges and tunnels, compared to a total of 499 in 2007, and 634 for 2006.

According to Fortunato, there is historically a spike in DWI arrests at Bridges and Tunnels' facilities during the summer months, and another rise around the holidays beginning after Thanksgiving.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has determined that three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives. Alcohol-related crashes in the United States cost about \$51 billion a year.

The agency's advice for drivers who plan to be on the roads, bridges and tunnels throughout December includes the following tips to reduce the threat from substance-impaired driving and help prevent injuries and accidents on the road:

- Don't drive after drinking alcohol or taking drugs that impair function.
- Plan ahead and designate a sober driver before a party or celebration.
- Do not let anyone else drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Always obey toll plaza and bridge speed limits. Maintain a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you, especially if that vehicle is moving erratically, too slow, or too fast.
- Buckle your safety belt before starting your vehicle.
- Be prepared: visit www.mta.info and go to the "MTA Bridges and Tunnels" page for service updates about our nine crossings.

For more information on the CDC's December public awareness campaign, go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/ImpairedDriving/>

MTA Bridges and Tunnels facilities serve more than 800,000 customers daily. These facilities, which connect the five boroughs of New York City, are the Robert F. Kennedy (formerly Triborough), Throgs Neck, Bronx-Whitestone, Henry Hudson, Verrazano-Narrows, Cross Bay Veterans Memorial and Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial Bridges, and the Queens Midtown and Brooklyn-Battery Tunnels.