



WEST FELICIANA PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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West Feliciana Parish Sheriff's Office Launches "High Intensity DWI Enforcement Initiative" All Impaired Drivers Will Be Tested

To combat the often-deadly problem of impaired driving, the West Feliciana Parish Sheriff's Office will be cracking down on impaired drivers.



WFPSO's Cpl. Zachary Beasley performing a Standard Field Sobriety Test.

This latest enforcement strategy is one of a series of high intensity DWI enforcement initiatives. All suspected impaired drivers caught driving under the influence who refuse breath testing or whose impairment is inconsistent with breath test results, indicating drug impairment, will be subject to blood testing.

"Impaired driving remains a major public safety threat that still claims thousands of innocent lives on roadways every year. These high intensity DWI enforcement initiatives represent one more step in our battle against this scourge," said Sheriff Brian Spillman.

In West Feliciana Parish, as well as the rest of America, anyone driving with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 grams per deciliter or higher is considered legally impaired. We are also seeing a significant increase in drug impaired driving. However, many impaired drivers refuse to submit to BAC testing in an attempt to avoid—or have reduced—the criminal sanctions they could face upon conviction.

BAC test refusals are increasing around the Nation. The most recent NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) data indicates refusal rates nationwide hover around 24 percent.

The high intensity DWI enforcement initiative is designed to address this issue. Police and other law enforcement officials work in coordination with prosecutors and judges to quickly obtain "blood draw warrants" for drivers who refuse BAC testing or whose impairment is inconsistent with the breath test results. With the approval of a judge, anyone suspected of impaired driving who refuses to provide a breath sample is subject to blood testing at the scene, a medical facility, or nearest jail facility. The program helps ensure that prosecutors obtain the scientific evidence needed to effectively pursue cases involving impaired driving.

According to the NHTSA, there were 10,142 alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in the United States in 2019.