



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Nov. 17, 2015

Plan for a Safe Thanksgiving Road Trip

By John D. Doak, Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner

The holiday travel season kicks off this month with one of the busiest travel weekends of the year. Many Oklahomans will hit the road for Thanksgiving. Because of the number of people expected on the roadways, experts say more deadly car accidents are likely to occur.

But there are a few simple things you can do before and during your trip to protect you and your family. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends the following:

PLAN AHEAD

- Plan your travel and route by checking the weather and road conditions. Allow plenty of time to arrive safely to your Thanksgiving destination.
- Pack your car with items that can be useful in an emergency including: ice scraper, jumper cables, flashlight, flares, blankets, cell phone chargers and extra water and non-perishable food.

CHECK YOUR VEHICLE AND TIRES

- Inspect your tires to avoid a blowout and ensure proper grip in bad weather. Make sure each tire is filled to the manufacturer's recommended inflation pressure. Don't forget to check your spare tire too.
- Check to see if your car has been recalled. You can enter your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) into NHTSA's [free online search](#) tool to find out. If there's been a recall, call the manufacturer. Ask for solutions while waiting for the free fix.
- Keep up with routine maintenance. Before you leave for your Thanksgiving trip, have the entire vehicle checked thoroughly.

BUCKLE UP, DRIVE SOBER AND PAY ATTENTION

- Always wear your seat belt. If you're traveling with children, the best way to protect them in the car is to put them in the right child safety seat.

- Never drive drunk. Every 45 minutes someone dies in the U.S. from an alcohol-impaired-driving crash. If there's alcohol at your Thanksgiving gathering, make sure there's a designated driver.
- Don't drive distracted. According to NHTSA data from 2012, 10 percent of deadly crashes and 18 percent of injury crashes were because of a distraction. The new texting-and-driving law went into effect in Oklahoma this month. You can be pulled over and fined if you are caught.

Before you hit the road, it's also a good idea to touch base with your insurance agent to go over your auto insurance policy. Of course you're required to carry liability coverage, but you'll also want protection from financial ruin. Make sure you have collision coverage, which pays for damage your car sustains in an accident you cause, and comprehensive, which reimburses you for loss due to theft or damage from something other than a collision, such as fire, falling trees and contact with deer or other animals. I also recommend uninsured motorist coverage which pays for injuries from a crash with an uninsured motorist.

Finally, Oklahoma's weather can be unpredictable. If road conditions are hazardous on the day you'd planned to leave, just avoid driving. Wait until roads and weather conditions improve before risking your safety.

With a little planning, you and your family can enjoy Thanksgiving safely and avoid any dangerous situations this season.

For any other insurance information contact the Oklahoma Insurance Department at 1-800-522-0071 or visit our website at www.ok.gov/oid.

About the Oklahoma Insurance Department

The Oklahoma Insurance Department, an agency of the State of Oklahoma, is responsible for the education and protection of the insurance-buying public and for oversight of the insurance industry in the state.

For more information, contact:

Kelly Dexter

405-522-0683

Kelly.Dexter@oid.ok.gov