



The four most dangerous holiday driving hazards

Source: EHS Today



It's the holiday season and a joyous time of the year. However, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) wants you to be careful if you are out driving this holiday season. Did you know there are more motor vehicle deaths around the three to four days around each holiday? In the few days surrounding Christmas and New Year's Eve, an average of 304 people die in drunk driving crashes.

Driving when you are impaired or distracted is always dangerous, but add low visibility, rain, fog, and the pressures of the holiday season, and December just might be one of the most dangerous

months to be on the road. Doug Horn, of "Drive by Example," lists the four most dangerous holiday driving hazards:

- Distracted driving - This includes driving while using cell phones for both talking and texting holiday messages to friends, coworkers and family. It also includes driving while checking out store hours and locations using a smartphone to surf the web.
- Impaired driving - Year-end dinners, parties and celebrations typically involve consumption of alcohol, and in some cases, use of drugs. Also, be careful with cold medication which can make you sleepy and impair your judgement.
- Pressured driving - The winter holidays typically bring with them increased pressures, especially financial pressures and the stress created by trying to do too much in a short time span. Drivers often react to these pressures by driving too fast for conditions, making aggressive lane changes, failing to yield right-of-way,

and generally disregarding the needs and safety of others using the road.

- Fatigued driving - "Increased demands and activities during the winter holidays often mean significantly reduced sleep schedules," Horn added. "According to a study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, people who slept 6-7 hours a night were twice as likely to be involved in a crash as those sleeping 8 hours or more, while people sleeping less than 5 hours increased their risk four to five times.



So this holiday season, take this list and check it twice – and stay safe out there.

Not home for the holidays? Keep your home safe.

Source: US News and Money



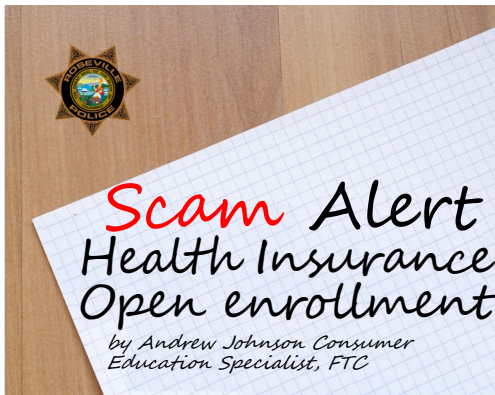
Are you heading out to see family and friends this holiday season? For many it's the best part of the holiday season. Before you rush out the door, make sure to secure your home.

- Lock up. This may seem like an obvious rule of safety, but sometimes the most obvious rules are the ones we forget to follow. Make sure every door and window in your home is properly shut and locked. If you don't already have a deadbolt on your doors, you may want to consider investing in one, as it can make your door more secure and offer you peace of mind.
- Avoid posting your whereabouts on social media. Some people post everything on Facebook—even if it's
- just a photo of lunch. It's only natural that you would want to post a status on Facebook or Twitter sharing your excitement about traveling for the holidays. However, you may want to think twice about this. You never know who may be looking at your social media
- Put lights on a timer. If you have holiday lights, put them on an automatic timer when you go out of town. You can set the timer so that your lights go on at a certain hour each night, making it appear as if you're in your home at all times. Consider setting a few indoor lights on timers as well to help your residence look lived in even when you're not there.
- Don't leave a key. Having a spare house key is a must. However, it's crucial to be careful about where you store that key. Don't leave it in a fake rock or place it under your doormat because these are locations criminals will look. Instead, leave a key with a trusted friend or neighbor so you'll have it if you need it.
- Ask someone to pick up your mail, or stop your mail. There is another benefit about having friendly

neighbors. They can pick up your mail and newspapers. Having newspapers piled up on your doorstep might as well be a sign saying, "Hey everyone; I'm not home." You can also easily temporarily stop mail delivery on the U.S. Postal Service website.

- Hide any Christmas gifts. You probably want to keep gifts out of sight from children, but you also want to make sure gifts are hidden from a potential burglar as well. Putting pretty wrapped gifts under the Christmas tree looks nice, but it's also an open invitation for a burglar. Try to keep your Christmas tree, with gifts underneath, away from windows or other places with a view.





Avoiding open enrollment scams

Open enrollment is here. Whether you're eligible for Medicare, selecting a plan through the Affordable Care Act (ACA), or have private insurance, you have until December 15 to compare plans and make coverage changes. But as you're keeping an eye out for the best options, also keep an eye out for scammers. Here are a few tips for avoiding scams this open enrollment season.

Eligible for Medicare?

- Anyone that tries to sell you Medicare insurance while claiming to be an "official Medicare agent" is a scammer. There are no Medicare sales representatives.
- The Medicare prescription drug plan (also known as Part D) is

voluntary. Ignore anyone who calls saying you must join their prescription plan or you will lose your Medicare coverage.

- Do not give any information over the phone to someone who tells you that you must provide information to keep your coverage.

If you need help with Medicare, call 1-800-MEDICARE or go to [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov).



Looking for coverage under the **Affordable Care Act?** If you apply by December 15, 2017, your coverage will start on January 1st, 2018. If you apply after December 15, you will have to wait until February or March for your coverage to be active.

- Only shop for coverage at [HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov). People who try to

sign you up elsewhere may be scammers.



- Need free assistance? There are people and groups in your community who can help you find coverage and enroll in a plan — and it's free! To make sure they are legitimate, [use the local help resource at HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov)

Buying private insurance?

- Make sure insurance is what you're really getting. There are many [medical discount plans](#) that pretend to be insurance, but they are not. Your [state insurance commissioner's office](#) can tell you if a plan is insurance or not and whether the seller is licensed in your state.

Think you've spotted a scam? Report it to the [FTC](https://www.ftc.gov). If the scam is Medicare related, report it at [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov). Don't forget to share these tips with your friends and family. It just might help them avoid a scam this open season.

"Cloud" Security

by Norm Hinman, City of Roseville, Information System Administrator



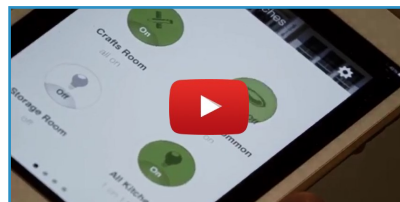
"Cloud storage," "Cloud access," and "Cloud control"—we hear these terms all the time. But what about "Cloud Security?" The "cloud" which is just the current nickname for the Internet, is also another name for a place that is accessible to the world. When you connect to the cloud, it's kind of like having your front door open to the downtown streets and back rooms of every major city on the planet.

With regard to data, we need to ask more questions about what is done with our data. Who owns it? What happens to it if we close our account? How well is it protected? What does it take to access the system or data? Is it encrypted? Similarly, when a device in our home, car, or office is controllable from the cloud, what ensures it cannot be controlled by hackers?

Here are a couple of good short videos to get you thinking about how you want to securely make use of the "cloud."

BBC Video on Smart Home Systems

<https://youtu.be/kquTJBKUdTQ>



Top 5 tips for Cloud Storage

<https://youtu.be/tS7fx2hGU>



As we move more and more into cloud-based devices, systems, and services, it is important to think about protecting information and restricting control that can be accessed from the "cloud." You may also decide there are certain systems and data to which you don't want to connect or store in "the cloud."

Sources: Sources: EHS Today, US News & Money, Federal Trade Commission (FTC), City of Roseville

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RCONA
(Roseville Coalition Of
Neighborhood Associations)
www.RCONA.org

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