

DID YOU KNOW???

HELP KEEP SANTA SAFE THIS CHRISTMAS EVE

If you are a reader of these weekly articles on traffic safety you know I do a special article in December about how Santa has to have the right-of-way everywhere in order to complete his rounds. Santa must be aware of these articles involving him, as he recently contacted me and requested that I address some of his concerns, so here goes!

Last year, Santa was almost killed when, while landing in a busy city, someone was video chatting on their smart phone and didn't even see Santa in his bright red clothes, or Rudolph, with his red nose so bright, and almost crashed into the sleigh. All Santa wants is for drivers to stay off their smart phones, and should you receive a call, pull over to answer it; don't try to carry on a conversation and drive – you can't do both safely.

In another incident last year, Santa had a narrow miss when an obviously intoxicated driver was weaving along the road from side to side, almost hitting Santa's sleigh which was stopped along a row of apartment houses for Santa to deliver presents. Santa's plea is to NEVER drink and drive. Either drink and don't drive, or drive and don't drink!

Santa told me of a third case where a pick-up truck was driving much too fast for the slippery road conditions, and, when the truck's driver saw Santa and his reindeer ahead of him, tried to stop on the snow-covered road and skidded directly toward Santa. Luckily Santa saw him coming in time to avoid the crash. Santa pleads with all drivers to plan ahead better so you don't have to hurry all the time. Speed kills! Santa is the one that should be in a hurry, as he has to travel around the world on but one night. However, with good planning of his route, he is able to complete his journey without ever causing a crash. That should be a good lesson for us all. Leave earlier so you don't have to speed.

Another story of a near-miss, again last year, was a driver that fell asleep while driving. This driver went off the road and crashed into the house that Santa was about to deliver Christmas gifts to. Luckily for Santa, he was still getting the right present from his sleigh and wasn't in the way of the wayward vehicle. But the incident did give Santa a major problem – the crash woke up the sleeping children, so Santa had to sneak down the chimney, drop off the toys, and return to his sleigh without being noticed by the awake but still-sleepy kids. The lesson to be learned from this episode is not to drive any vehicle when you're sleepy. If you haven't arrived at your destination and feel sleepy, pull off the road and take a power nap. Don't rely on drinking a cup of coffee; it's sleep you need.

These are just a few of the crashes or near misses that Santa worries about. So, please, everyone, we need to do a better job of keeping Santa safe this Christmas – he deserves the cooperation from ALL DRIVERS. We need to keep Santa safe so he'll be around next year too! Please do your part, not only tonight, Christmas Eve, but at all times.

From me and all of the members of the Franklin County Traffic Safety Board, have a merry Christmas, and the best to you in 2019. Please drive safely!