

Former New Jersey Prosecutor Warns Drivers as Holiday DWI Enforcement Surges in Middlesex County

Former New Jersey prosecutor warns Middlesex County drivers about holiday DWI enforcement, NJ DWI penalties under N.J.S.A. 39:4-50, and what to do if stopped.

WOODBIDGE, NJ, UNITED STATES, September 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With the holiday season approaching, police departments across Middlesex County are preparing their annual DWI enforcement crackdown, and one former municipal prosecutor says drivers should understand exactly what's at stake before they get behind the wheel.

"From Thanksgiving through New Year's, departments across the county add DWI patrols and run sobriety checkpoints," said Anthony J. Vecchio, a Woodbridge-based criminal defense attorney who previously served as a municipal prosecutor in Monmouth County. "Most people are surprised to learn that in New Jersey, a first DWI conviction alone can mean thousands of dollars in fines and surcharges, up to 30 days in jail, and an ignition interlock device on your car for months."

Under N.J.S.A. 39:4-50, penalties escalate with blood alcohol concentration. A first offense with a BAC of 0.08% to 0.099% carries a \$250–\$400 fine, up to 30 days in jail, 12 to 48 hours at an Intoxicated Driver Resource Center, and an ignition interlock for approximately three months. At 0.10% or higher, fines rise to \$300–\$500 with longer interlock periods. Refusing a breath test triggers a separate license forfeiture of seven months to a year on a first offense.

"What many drivers don't realize is that a DWI stop is a process with rules the police have to follow," Vecchio said. "There has to be a lawful reason for the stop. The field sobriety tests have to be administered correctly. The breath-testing machine has to be properly calibrated and operated. Any break in that chain can be challenged."

Vecchio, who prosecuted DWI and traffic cases before entering criminal defense, says that perspective shapes how he evaluates cases. "Having been the one presenting these cases in court, I know what the State needs to prove and where these cases tend to fall apart," he said. "That doesn't mean every case is winnable — it means every case deserves a hard look at the evidence."

He advises drivers who are stopped to remain calm, provide license and registration, and

understand that New Jersey's implied-consent law means refusing a breath test carries its own penalties.

About the Law Office of Anthony J. Vecchio, LLC

The Law Office of Anthony J. Vecchio, LLC is a Woodbridge, New Jersey criminal defense practice focused on DWI/DUI defense, municipal court matters, and traffic offenses, serving clients across Middlesex, Monmouth, and Union counties. Anthony J. Vecchio previously served as a municipal prosecutor in Monmouth County municipalities. For more information on New Jersey DWI defense, visit <https://www.anthonyvecchiolaw.com/nj-dwi-lawyer/> or call (732) 303-7341.

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