



VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Avoid the 18 DUI Task Force Cracking Down On Impaired Drivers This Fourth of July

Visalia, CA – Most Americans may not realize it, but the Fourth of July is one of the deadliest holidays of the year due to alcohol-impaired driving crashes.

That's why this Fourth of July law enforcement throughout Tulare and Kings Counties are stepping up enforcement efforts as part of the ongoing Avoid the 18 DUI Task Force, joining thousands of agencies statewide in the "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" enforcement crackdown to catch and arrest impaired drivers who put themselves and others at risk.

"The Fourth of July is one of the deadliest holidays due to impaired-driving fatalities," said Sergeant Chris McLain of the Visalia Police Department. "Too many people die behind the wheel each year due to those who choose to drive after drinking, so our officers will be out in full force this Fourth of July holiday weekend showing zero tolerance for impaired drivers."

To save lives on our roadways the Tulare/Kings County DUI Task Force will be cracking down on drug and alcohol impaired driving, deploying officers to DUI/Driver's License checkpoints, and DUI saturation patrols. The CHP will be deploying all available officers onto freeways and county roads for its Maximum Enforcement Period (MEP). ****See attached Enforcement Schedule of Operations**** for dates and city locations for the July 3rd to midnight July 7th crackdown.

Impaired-driving crashes killed more than 10,000 people in 2010, accounting for 31 percent of all traffic-related fatalities in the United States. That's an average of one alcohol-impaired-driving fatality every 51 minutes. Even without a crash, there are numerous consequences as a result of being caught driving impaired, such as jail time, insurance hikes, loss of driver's license, embarrassment, and costs up to \$10,000, just to name a few.



But the percentage of fatalities from impaired driving spike around the Fourth of July. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 392 people were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes during the Fourth of July holiday in 2010 (*6:00pm July 2- 5:59am July 6.*) Of those fatalities, 39 percent were in crashes that involved at least one driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08% or higher.

Often Fourth of July celebrations start during the day, but last well into the night – making the dangers from impaired drivers even higher at night.

“The amount of alcohol that one can consume during a day-long party or celebration can drastically impair the motor skills needed to drive safely,” said Sergeant Chris McLain. “Add the fact that many others may be out driving impaired, and that visual skills also decrease at night, and you have a recipe for disaster.”

What is even more tragic about the statistics is the high number of fatalities among 18- to 34-year-olds. Forty-six percent of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities during the 2010 Fourth of July holiday period were within this age group. These are people who have their whole life ahead of them, but in one instant, one act of irresponsibility, they can lose it all.

“Those who try to drink and drive this Fourth of July should be forewarned. We will be out in force looking for impaired drivers, and we will catch and arrest you. No warnings. No excuses,” said Sergeant Chris McLain.

The Avoid the 18 DUI Task Force recommends these simple tips for a safe Fourth of July:

- Plan a safe way home before the fun begins;
- Before drinking, designate a sober driver;
- If you’re impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation;
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don’t hesitate to report it - Call 911!
- And remember, “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.” If you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.
- For more information, please visit www.nhtsa.gov/drivesober.

Avoid the **18** DUI Task Force funding is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Independence Day Weekend Schedule of Operations

DUI/Drivers License Checkpoints:

FRIDAY, July 5th: Visalia PD: 9 p.m. to 3 a.m.
Dinuba PD: 9 p.m. to 3 a.m.

Saturation Patrols:

WEDNESDAY, July 3rd: DUI Roving Saturation Patrols will be assigned by police within the cities of Woodlake and Corcoran.



THURSDAY July 4th: DUI Roving Saturation Patrols will be assigned by police within the cities of Farmersville, Visalia, and Exeter.

FRIDAY July 5th: DUI Roving Saturation Patrols will be assigned by police within the cities of Woodlake and Corcoran.

SATURDAY July 6th: DUI Roving Saturation Patrols will be assigned by police within the city of Tulare.

***All county law enforcement agencies plan heavy staffing levels for Independence Day festivities on Thursday the 4th.

California Highway Patrol Maximum Enforcement Period: CHP will assign all available officers to the region's freeways and unincorporated roads beginning 6 PM Wednesday through midnight Sunday.

Law Enforcement throughout California reminds everyone to *'Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over'*. Funding for the California Avoid DUI Campaign is from a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration who reminds everyone – *'Report Drunk Drivers – Call 911'*

