



VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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This Fourth of July, ‘Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over’ by Tulare/Kings Counties ‘Avoid the 18’ DUI Task Force

The Fourth of July is a favorite holiday for many Americans. Families and friends gather to celebrate our country with food, parades, parties, and fireworks. For many people, the celebration includes alcohol, but the holiday quickly goes from festive to fatal when people choose to drive after drinking. Over the July 4th holiday period in 2012 alone, 78 people were killed in alcohol impaired-driving crashes on our nation’s roads.

To crack down on drunk driving this Fourth of July, The Avoid the 18 DUI Task Force will be out in full force, aggressively targeting those who put lives in danger. “Every Tulare and Kings County law enforcement agency is ramping up their enforcement to make our roads safer this Fourth of July,” said Sergeant Chris McLain of the Visalia Police Department. “For everyone’s sake, don’t drink and drive or you will be targeted for arrest. The ‘Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over’ campaign means zero tolerance for drunk driving – no excuses.”

The Avoid the 18 DUI task force will be cracking down on drug and alcohol impaired driving, deploying officers to DUI/Drivers 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).

Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that 10,322 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes in the United States in 2012—representing a third of all crash fatalities. Data shows that the Fourth of July holiday period is especially deadly. During the July 4th period in 2012 (6 p.m. on July 3 to 5:59 a.m. on July 5), there were 179 people killed in crashes, and 44 percent of those crashes were alcohol-impaired.

In every state, it is illegal to drive with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08% BAC, yet people continue to break the law and drive drunk. According to the FBI, over 1.28 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics in 2012. And the rate of high-BAC impaired driving is astounding. In fatal crashes during the July 4th period in 2012, more than one fourth (28%) involved a driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC of .15 or higher – almost twice the legal limit.



NHTSA data also reveals that 46 percent of young (age 18-34) drivers were drunk (BAC of .08 or higher) while driving in fatal crashes over the July 4th period in 2012(6 p.m. on July 3 to 5:59 a.m. on July 5). Motorcycle operators are also overrepresented as the highest percentage of alcohol impaired drivers in fatal crashes. In 2012, more than one-fourth (27%) of the motorcycle operators in fatal crashes had a BAC of .08 or higher.

Drunk drivers are more common at night, too. Over the July 4th period in 2012, more than a third (39%) of the drivers in nighttime fatal crashes (6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m.) were alcohol-impaired, as compared to 16 percent of drivers in fatal crashes during the day.

“This Fourth of July holiday, you can show your patriotism by helping to make Tulare and Kings County roads safer for everyone,” said Sgt. McLain. “Remember,” he warned, “to *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*. It’s as simple as that.” Law enforcement is not messing around this Independence Day: if you’re caught driving drunk, you will be arrested. And keep in mind that aside from putting your life and the lives of others at risk, driving impaired can also lead to serious consequences. A DUI arrest can mean time in jail, loss of your license, and steep financial expenses; the average DUI costs about \$10,000.

Law Enforcement recommends these simple tips to prevent drunk driving:

- 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 Call 9-1-1;
- 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.

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