



# Avoid the 18 Tulare-Kings Counties

## PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

March 12, 2015

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## Be a Saint. Drive Sober.

### *St. Patrick's Day is One of the Deadliest Days of the Year Because of Drunk Driving*

**Visalia, Ca**—St. Patrick's Day brings to mind shamrocks, leprechauns, pots of gold, and good luck. But no amount of luck can save you from a drunk-driving crash. So whether you're buzzed or drunk on St. Patrick's Day, it doesn't matter. NHTSA wants to remind everyone that *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*—drive sober.

The Avoid the 18 – Tulare-Kings Counties DUI Task Force will be deploying 3 roving DUI patrols this St. Patrick's Day in several communities throughout the area looking to stop and arrest drivers who are impaired by alcohol or drugs. These DUI patrols are, in addition to regularly scheduled patrol officers, all looking for the tell-tale signs of an impaired driver behind the wheel.

In 2013, there were 31 people killed in drunk-driving crashes on St. Patrick's Day. All in all, during the St. Patty's Day period from 2009 to 2013, there have been 276 drunk-driving fatalities. Every one of those lives was lost because of bad decisions. Unfortunately, March 17 has become a deadly day in the United States, with a dramatic spike in drunk-driving fatalities. And we're not just talking about a little bit too much to drink here; from 2009 to 2013, almost three-fourths of the drunk-driving fatalities on St. Patrick's Day involved drivers who were *twice* the legal limit.

The Visalia Police Department offered this advice to partygoers: "Get ahead of the decision this year. If you know you're going to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with alcohol, then figure out a plan ahead of time for how you'll get home. Don't wait until you're too buzzed to decide, and don't let your friends drive drunk." *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*, so if you have anything to drink, count on a sober friend, taxi, or public transportation to drive you home safely. Not drinking? Maybe this St. Patrick's Day, you'll be the saint who drives your friends sober.

Let's make 2015 different. Use this party-planning checklist to stay safe this St. Patrick's Day.

- **DDVIP:** The California Office of Traffic Safety DDVIP app is now available for free download on iOS and Android devices. Launched last year the new DDVIP app offers enhanced features, allowing users to "Map a Spot" with their current location to find DDVIP partnering establishments in their area or a "List of Spots" to search all participating bars and restaurants throughout California. Users can stay up-to-date with the latest from DDVIP and see what other users are saying via its social tab. Also through the app, for those who want to imbibe but also make it a point to plan ahead, users can easily order a sober ride from Uber, Lyft or Curb – all from one screen.
- **NOW:** Even if you don't have plans yet, plan to drive sober or designate someone else to. Save the number of a taxi company in your phone so you always have a backup plan.

- **WHEN YOU MAKE PLANS:** A sober driver is an essential part of any party plan. Once you know where you'll celebrate, decide whether you're drinking *or* driving. You can only choose one.
- **ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY:** Before you take your first sip of green beer, leave your keys at home or give them to a friend. If you're the designated driver, don't drink. Enjoy non-alcoholic beverages and brag about your VIP (very important partygoer) status online using the hashtag #designateddriver. Only drive sober or ride with a sober driver.
- **EVERY DAY:** If you're impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation to get home safely. If available, use your community's free ride program. If you know people who are about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.
- **DRUGS, MEDICATION & ALCOHOL= CRASHES:** Recent statistics reveal that 30 percent of drivers in fatal crashes had one or more drugs in their systems. A study of active drivers showed more tested positive for drugs that may impair driving (14 percent) than did for alcohol (7.3 percent). Of the drugs, marijuana was most prevalent, at 7.4 percent, slightly more than alcohol.

Avoid the 18 DUI Task Force funding is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that reminds everyone to 'Report Drunk Drivers! Call 9-1-1.' Stay connected with OTS via: <http://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS>, [http://twitter.com/#!/OTS\\_CA](http://twitter.com/#!/OTS_CA), [www.ots.ca.gov](http://www.ots.ca.gov). The Avoid the 18 DUI Coalitions' next task force operation is set for Cinco de Mayo.



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