



VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Jason Salazar, Chief of Police

Sergeant Damon Maurice, Public Information Officer
(559) 713-4216 (office) / (559) 713-4807 (fax)
damon.maurice@visalia.city

*****NEWS RELEASE*****
March 8, 2017

This St. Patrick's Day, Plan Before You Party!

Remember: Impaired Driving, Drugs and Alcohol can Kill

Visalia, CA - St. Patrick's Day has become one of the nation's favorite holidays to celebrate and party. Unfortunately, too many people are taking to the roads after drinking, making the holiday one of our most dangerous. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 252 people lost their lives in drunk driving-related crashes during the St. Patrick's Day holiday period from 2011-2015. More than a fourth of them were killed in drunk driving crashes that occurred in the early morning, post-party hours (midnight to 5:59 a.m.).

That's why the Visalia Police Department and the California Office of Traffic Safety are teaming up to reach all drivers with an important life-saving message and warning: Don't Drive Impaired by Drugs or Alcohol.

The Visalia Police Department will deploy additional officers on special DUI Saturation Patrols specifically to stop and arrest drivers showing signs of alcohol or drug impairment. In addition to this St. Patrick's Day enforcement effort, all police, sheriff and the CHP will be on heightened alert ready to stop and arrest any impaired driver throughout the long weekend.

"These needless deaths can be prevented," said Traffic Unit supervisor, Sergeant James Andrews. "Planning a sober ride home before the party begins is the first step in staying safe on St. Patrick's Day. Don't wait until you've already been drinking to make your transportation decision. Designate your sober driver in advance, and never get behind the wheel if you've been drinking."

If you plan to celebrate this St. Patrick's Day, follow these tips to stay safe:

- Before celebrating St. Patrick's Day this year, decide whether you'll drink or you'll drive. You can't do both. *"Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving"*
- If you're planning on driving, commit to staying sober. If you've been out drinking and then get behind the wheel, you run the risk of causing a crash or getting arrested for a DUI.
- Drugs such as many prescription medications, marijuana or illicit drugs can also lead to impairment and unsafe driving, leading to a DUI. When mixed with even a small amount of alcohol the affects can be compounded.
- If you have been drinking, call a taxi or sober friend or family member or use public transportation. You can download the Designated Driver VIP free mobile app, "DDVIP," for Android or iPhone. The DDVIP app helps find nearby bars and restaurants that feature free incentives for the designated sober driver, from free non-alcoholic drinks to free appetizers and more. The feature-packed app even has social media tie-ins and even a tab for the non-DD to call Uber, Lyft or Curb.
- Help those around you be responsible, too. Walking while impaired can also be deadly, as lack of attention could put you at risk of getting hit by a vehicle. If someone you know is impaired by alcohol or drugs, do not let them get behind the wheel and help them find a sober ride home.

This enforcement effort is funded by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration who reminds everyone to be alert and 'Report Drunk Drivers - Call 911' if you see a dangerous driver call immediately!



