



VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Stop Impaired Driving ***RIDE SOBER OR GET PULLED OVER***

The end of the summer is universally celebrated by millions of Americans on Labor Day weekend. For many motorcyclists, the weekend is a chance to close down summer with that last long ride. This year, Visalia PD is partnering with other agencies across the state to stop impaired motorcyclists and drivers to help save lives. The high-visibility national enforcement campaign, *Ride Sober or Get Pulled Over*, runs from August 18 through September 4, 2017. During this period, local law enforcement will show zero tolerance for alcohol or drug impaired riding. Increased state and national messages about the dangers of riding impaired, coupled with enforcement and increased officers on the road, aim to drastically reduce death and injuries on our nation's roadways.

The DUI Enforcement Team, members of the Traffic Unit and other officers will be deployed this weekend to stop and arrest alcohol and drug-impaired drivers. These extra officers on the roadways are aimed to drastically reduce impaired driving in our community.

In 2015, there were 4,976 motorcyclists (4,684 riders and 292 passengers) killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes—an increase of more than 8 percent from the 4,586 motorcyclists killed in 2014 nationwide. Even though motorcycles only account for about 3 percent of registered vehicles on the road, motorcyclists are dramatically overrepresented in fatal crashes – especially those involving alcohol.

It takes years of training and specialized skill to ride a motorcycle, according to the Visalia Police Department. When motorcyclists decide to mix drinking or drugs and riding, their skills are impaired. This can lead to a number of situations, the worst of which is loss of life. There is no situation in which it is acceptable to drive “buzzed” or impaired (riding a motorcycle is no safer than driving a car).

Youth also plays a factor in deadly motorcycle accidents. In 2015, nearly half (44%) of impaired-driving motorcyclists were between the ages of 18 and 34. In the same year, 1,905 alcohol-impaired motorcyclists died in single-vehicle crashes. Sixty-three percent of those killed in single-vehicle crashes on weekend nights were alcohol impaired.



In recent years, California has seen an increase in drug-impaired driving crashes. Visalia PD supports the new effort from the Office of Traffic Safety that aims to educate all drivers that “DUI Doesn’t Just Mean Booze.” If you take prescription drugs, particularly those with a driving or operating machinery warning on the label, you might be impaired enough to get a DUI. Marijuana use can also be impairing, especially in combination with alcohol or other drugs, and can result in a DUI.

Have family or a friend who is about to ride ‘buzzed’ or impaired? Take the keys away and make arrangements to get them home safely. The cost of a ride home is cheap. Anyone caught riding impaired can expect the impact of a DUI arrest to include jail time, fines, fees, DUI classes, license suspensions and other expenses that can exceed \$10,000.

Funding for this DUI operation is provided to the Visalia Police Department by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, reminding everyone to ‘Report Drunk Driver – Call 9-1-1’.

