

Prevent impaired driving this St. Patrick's Day

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March 9, 2010 -- Saint Patrick's Day is widely observed by Americans of all ethnic backgrounds. While it's a day to celebrate Irish heritage and perhaps enjoy the company of friends, it can turn deadly due to impaired driving. Whether you're attending a parade or making a trip to the local pub, don't rely on the luck of the Irish to keep you safe. Designate a sober driver before the party begins - *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*.

Driving while impaired during the St. Patrick's Day holiday puts everyone on the roads at risk:

- Over the past five years, 851 people lost their lives in motor vehicles crashes during the St. Patrick's Day holiday. Out of that number, 327 were killed in crashes that involved a driver or motorcycle rider (operator) with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher.

- In 2007 alone, 91 people were killed in crashes involving a drunk driver or motorcycle rider (operator) with a BAC of .08 or higher during this holiday.

- Every year, thousands of people needlessly lose their lives in motor vehicle crashes involving impaired drivers and motorcyclists. Of the 41,059 people killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2007, 12,998 involved at least one driver or motorcycle rider (operator) with a BAC of .08 or higher.

** NHTSA defines the St. Patrick's Day Holiday as 6:00 p.m. March 16th through 6:59 a.m. on March 18th.*

Whether you're meeting a few friends at the pub or attending the local parade, if you plan on drinking, don't drive. If you notice your friend is showing signs of impairment, don't let him or her get behind the wheel.

- Plan a safe way home before your celebrations begin;

- If you plan to get a ride home with someone else, designate a sober driver before any drinking begins;

- If you're impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation so you are sure to get home safely;
- Consider using your community's Sober Rides program
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don't hesitate to contact your local law enforcement;
- And remember, if you know someone who is about to drive or ride their motorcycle while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

Impaired driving has dire consequences. Don't rely on the luck of the Irish this St. Patrick's Day.

- The tragedies and costs from drunk driving are not limited to death, disfigurement, disability or injury. They also can lead to the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest, which can be very significant.
- People that break the law often face jail time, the loss of their driver's license, higher insurance rates, and dozens of other unanticipated expenses from attorney fees, fines, court costs, increased insurance rates, car towing, repairs, lost time at work, etc.
- Plus there is the added embarrassment and humiliation after informing family, friends, and employers. Remember on St. Patrick's Day, *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*.
- For additional information contact the Army Substance Abuse Program at 245-4576.

Information provided by the Army Center Substance Abuse Program.