

SFPD DUI Patrols for St. Patrick's Day Weekend

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As St. Patrick's Day approaches, San Francisco Police and Avoid the 8 DUI Task Force coordinator is urging motorists to plan a safe ride home and never get behind the wheel drunk or drugged. During this holiday police agencies and CHP throughout San Francisco County will be on high alert, cracking down on drunk drivers as part of its Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over public safety campaign.

"St. Patrick's Day is always a time to celebrate and to enjoy, but we want everyone to be mindful of safety on roadways," said Captain Denise Flaherty of the San Francisco Police Department's Traffic Unit. "To that end, we will be stepping up our enforcement operations on the weekend against alcohol-impaired drivers. Motorists are advised that if they are driving impaired, they will be arrested: No warnings and no excuses."

The Avoid the 8 DUI Task Force will be deploying special roving DUI patrols and DUI Checkpoint city location this St. Patrick's Day weekend in several communities throughout the area, looking to stop and arrest drivers who are impaired by alcohol or drugs. These DUI patrols and checkpoint are, in addition to regularly scheduled patrol officers, all looking for the tell-tale signs of an impaired driver behind the wheel. The Avoid the 8 DUI Task Force will conduct a citywide DUI Saturation Patrol on Friday, March 15 from 7:00 P.M. to 3:00 A.M. We will also have a DUI Checkpoint

on Saturday, March 16 from 7:00 P.M. to 3:00 A.M.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that over 700 people were killed nationwide in crashes involving drunk drivers during St. Patrick's Day holidays from 2006 to 2010. On average, every 51 minutes a person is killed in a drunk-driving crash in the United States and the majority of these crashes involve drivers who have a .15% BAC or higher, almost twice legal limit of .08%.

"Whether you are gathering with friends at the local pub or attending any St. Patrick's Day events, if alcohol is part of the festivities, make sure you designate a sober driver to get you home safely, or contact your local sober ride program for a ride home," said Captain Flaherty.

The Avoid the 8 Task Force recommends the following easy steps to have a safe and happy St. Patrick's Day:

- Plan a safe way home before the festivities begin.
- Before drinking, designate a sober driver and leave your car keys at home.
- If you're impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation to get home safely.
- Use your community's sober ride program
- Report Drunk Drivers - Call 911.
- And remember, if you know someone who is about to drive a car or ride a motorcycle while impaired, take the keys and help that person make other arrangements to get to where he or she is going safely.

The Task Force is funded through a grant by the California Office of Traffic Safety through the national Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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