



NEWS RELEASE

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LAW ENFORCEMENT TO ST. PATRICK'S FANATICS: DESIGNATE O'DRIVER

Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

ARMER/911
Program

Bureau of Criminal
Apprehension

Driver
and Vehicle
Services

Homeland Security
and Emergency
Management

Minnesota
State Patrol

Office of
Communications

Office of
Justice Programs

Office of
Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal
and
Pipeline Safety

ST. PAUL — Minnesota law enforcement will ramp up DWI patrols in the state's 15 deadliest counties for impaired driving during the St. Patrick's Day weekend. Operation NightCAP (nighttime concentrated alcohol patrol) will target the counties of Anoka, Beltrami, Blue Earth, Cass, Crow Wing, Dakota, Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey, Rice, St. Louis, Sherburne, Stearns, Washington and Wright.

Over the last three years on St. Patrick's Day in Minnesota, alcohol-related crashes accounted for four of 11 traffic deaths and nine of 25 serious injuries. There were 1,263 impaired drivers arrested for DWI statewide on St. Patrick's Day 2005–2007.

Public Safety officials expect an extended celebration and a spike in impaired driving as the holiday will be celebrated on a Saturday. St. Patrick's Day was celebrated on a Saturday in 2007 and 526 motorists were arrested for DWI — nearly twice the DWI count from 2005 when the holiday landed on a Thursday.

“Impaired driving continues to be a serious threat on Minnesota roads, and it's up to motorists to make safe decisions to prevent serious crashes,” says Cheri Marti, director of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety. “Plan now for a safe ride, and avoid causing a tragedy and avoid a DWI.”

NightCAP is a federally funded enforcement campaign that combines state, county and city law enforcement agencies to attack impaired driving. The 15 deadliest counties accounted for more than half of the state's alcohol-related deaths (272) and serious injuries (762) during 2004–2006.

The current NightCAP campaign has generated 453 DWIs since patrols launched in October 2007. In February alone, participating officers stopped 1,866 vehicles, resulting in 104 DWIs, and 810 citations for traffic- and equipment-related violations.

Each year in Minnesota, alcohol-related crashes account for around 200 traffic deaths and more than 430 serious injuries.

Designate O'Driver.