



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MINNESOTA COPS: ST. PATRICK'S DAY DWI IS NOT "MAGICALLY DELICIOUS"

Added Enforcement Planned Prior to and on March 17

ST. PAUL — Extra DWI patrols will be out in the state's 13 deadliest counties for impaired driving this St. Patrick's Day, according to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS). The holiday is one of the busiest periods of the year for impaired driving activity. During 2005–2007 over the St. Patrick's Day period, alcohol-related crashes accounted for seven of the 12 traffic deaths and 13 serious injuries.

DPS officials expect a spike in impaired driving this weekend compared to the actual holiday, which falls on a Tuesday. During 2005–2007 over the St. Patrick's Day period, 1,575 impaired drivers were arrested for DWI. Each year more than 36,000 motorists are arrested for DWI. More than 500,000 Minnesotans have been arrested for DWI — one in eight with a driver's license. A DWI arrest can cost up to \$20,000 when factoring in legal costs and increased insurance premiums.

"There is a history of partying on St. Patrick's Day, but not a history of planning for a sober driver," says Lt. Matt Langer of the State Patrol. "Added DWI patrols are necessary to arrest impaired drivers and as a result, prevent deaths on Minnesota roads."

The enforcement is a component of the state's NightCAP (nighttime concentrated alcohol patrol) campaign that will target the 13 deadliest counties for impaired driving throughout 2009: Anoka, Blue Earth, Crow Wing, Dakota, Hennepin, Itasca, Ramsey, Rice, St. Louis, Sherburne, Stearns, Washington and Wright. In the last three years these counties accounted for nearly half of the state's alcohol-related deaths (272) and serious injuries (663).

Designate O'Driver

- Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement
- Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
- Driver and Vehicle Services
- Emergency Communication Networks
- Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Minnesota State Patrol
- Office of Communications
- Office of Justice Programs
- Office of Traffic Safety
- State Fire Marshal