



VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Colleen Mestas, Chief of Police

Sergeant Amy Watkins, Public Information Officer
(559) 713-4216 (office) / (559) 713-4807 (fax)
awatkins@ci.visalia.ca.us

NEWS RELEASE

March 12, 2013



Avoid the 18 Tulare/Kings County DUI Campaign



Heavy Police Presence This St. Patrick's Day to Catch Drunk Drivers Throughout Tulare and Kings Counties.

Visalia, Ca— As St. Patrick's Day approaches, the Avoid the 18 DUI Task Force is urging motorists to plan a safe ride home and never get behind the wheel drunk or drugged. During this holiday Police, Sheriff, and CHP throughout Tulare and Kings Counties will be on high alert, cracking down on drunk drivers as part of its *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* public safety campaign.

"Drunk driving is dangerous, deadly and against the law – and it will not be tolerated in communities this St. Patrick's Day," said Sergeant Chris McLain of the Visalia Police Department. "Today we are giving fair warning to everyone traveling in Tulare and Kings Counties that our law enforcement officers will be out on patrol and if you are caught driving drunk, you will be arrested."

The Avoid the 18 DUI Task Force will be deploying special roving DUI patrols 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 are, in addition to regularly scheduled patrol officers, all looking for the tell-tale signs of an impaired driver behind the wheel.

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 the local special event, parade or party, if alcohol is part of the festivities, make sure you designate a sober driver to get you home safely, or contact your local taxi company for a ride home," said Sergeant McLain.



The Avoid the 18 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.
- 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.

