



VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT
Colleen Mestas, Chief of Police

Sergeant Ozzie Dominguez, Public Information Officer
(559) 713-4216 (office) / (559) 713-4807 (fax)
odominguez@ci.visalia.ca.us

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Play It Safe This Cinco de Mayo!
Avoid the 18 Tulare/Kings Counties DUI Task Force Working to Reduce Drunken Driving Crashes, Fatalities

[Visalia, CA]— As party-goers celebrate Cinco de Mayo with mariachi music and authentic cuisine, many will also indulge with their favorite margarita or tequila, and then, unfortunately, choose to get behind the wheel. That’s why this year the **Avoid the 18 DUI Task Force** – Tulare and Kings Counties are joining with others across the state and nation to encourage everyone to plan ahead this Cinco de Mayo and to never drink and drive.

“With Cinco de Mayo celebrations on the rise across the country, alcohol-impaired crashes, injuries and fatalities will also rise,” said Sergeant Chris McLain of the Visalia Police Department. “But buzzed driving is drunk driving, and is never safe or acceptable. So folks should plan ahead now to avoid the temptation on the big day.”

Special DUI Saturations Patrols will be deployed this weekend in several cities within both counties looking to identify and stop suspected drunk drivers. Additionally, every routine traffic and patrol officer assigned to duty will be on heightened alert to prevent another senseless tragedy.

From 2007 to 2011, 38 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities that occurred each year around May 5th involved impaired drivers or motorcycle operators with blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) of .08 and above, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

During the 2011 Cinco de Mayo holiday alone, 35 percent of motor vehicle fatalities involved an alcohol-impaired driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC of .08 and above. A disturbing 80 percent of the alcohol impaired fatalities involved a driver or motorcycle operator with nearly twice the legal limit, showing a BAC of .15.

Sergeant Chris McLain said that people can still enjoy the holiday and celebrations without putting their lives, or the lives of other innocent victims on the line.



“When people start celebrating, they often aren’t thinking of how they will get home from the restaurant or a friend’s house, and they don’t realize how much they’ve had to drink and make a bad choice that ends in tragic consequences,” said McLain. “That’s why we are reminding folks to play it safe and plan ahead, designate a sober driver.”

Death or injuries are not the only consequences from impaired driving. When caught and arrested, violators often face jail time, loss of their driver’s license and it could cost up to \$10,000 in fees, fines, and higher insurance rates.

“You should always designate a sober driver before the party begins,” said McLain. “But, if you don’t plan ahead, and you’ve been drinking, do not get behind the wheel. There are plenty of other alternatives that will keep you and others safe and out of trouble.”

Party-goers can call a friend, cab, or use public transportation.

Avoid the **18** DUI Task Force funding is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration who reminds you – ‘Report Drunk Drivers, Call 911!’

