



# ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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SHERIFF-CORONER  
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## NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Orange County Sheriff's Department Awarded DUID Enhanced Testing Grant**

**SANTA ANA, Ca. (Nov. 2, 2018)** - The Orange County Sheriff's Department – OC Crime Lab has been awarded a \$316,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) for training and enhanced DUID testing.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department will use the funding to efficiently test all blood samples collected in DUI investigations for the presence of drugs, regardless of the blood alcohol concentration (BAC).

"We are seeing an increased number of impaired drivers on our roads, which puts the public at risk and compromises the safety of our communities," said Sheriff Sandra Hutchens. "The legalization of marijuana and the rise in opioid abuse compounds the problem, making it critical for law enforcement to be equipped with the proper tools and training. The Orange County Sheriff's Department will continue to seek additional resources and opportunities to keep everyone safe."

This year, the Governor's Highway Safety Administration reported that 43 percent of fatally-injured drivers tested positive for drugs, surpassing the frequency of alcohol. This is in agreement with other national reports that drug-impaired driving is increasing, while alcohol-impaired driving is decreasing. Based on data collected by the Orange County Crime Laboratory, 47 percent of drivers arrested for DUI in Orange County have at least one impairing drug in their system other than alcohol.

Illicit drugs and certain prescription and over-the-counter medications can cause impairment. These substances, in combination with even a small amount of alcohol, can cause a person to become unable to safely operate a motor vehicle.

"With the incidence of drug-impaired crashes on the rise, projects like this will go a long way to help in our understanding of how to convince drivers that impairments of any kind can be deadly when behind the wheel," said OTS Director Rhonda Craft. "The Orange County Sheriff's Department, with assistance from the Office of Traffic Safety, will be working to help keep the streets across the county safe for everyone."

While alcohol remains the worst offender for DUI crashes, The Orange County Sheriff's Department supports the new effort from OTS that aims to drive awareness that "DUI Doesn't Just Mean Booze." Prescription medications and marijuana can also be impairing by themselves, or in combination with alcohol, and can result in a DUI arrest.



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Funding for the program comes from a grant by the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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