



ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

550 N. FLOWER STREET
SANTA ANA, CA 92703
714-647-7000
WWW.OCS.D.ORG

SHERIFF-CORONER
SANDRA HUTCHENS

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Lt. Jeff Hallock, 714.904.7042

JHallock@ocsd.org

Orange County DUI Task Force Holiday Crackdown on Impaired Driving

SANTA ANA, Calif. – (December 12, 2014) — This time of year, with all the holiday parties and festive occasions, many partygoers will be drinking. If you are celebrating with alcohol this holiday season, local law enforcement agencies have a message for you: *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*. Due to the increase in drunk-driving-related fatalities around the holidays each year, law enforcement agencies across the country will be out in force December 12, 2014 through January 1, 2015 actively searching for drunk drivers.

The Orange County Avoid DUI Task Force will be aggressively looking for drunk drivers this holiday season with plans in place for 14 DUI/Driver's License Checkpoints, a minimum of 27 local roving DUI Saturation Patrols and a DUI Warrant/Probation Sweep.

The facts are grim: on average, a third (31%) of all crash fatalities in America involves drunk driving. In December 2012 there were 830 people killed in crashes involving at least one driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher; 26 of those deaths occurred on Christmas Day. But on Christmas day 2012, the percentage jumped to 36 percent. For all of 2012, more than 10,322 people are killed by drunk drivers in America, with 802 of those in California alone. In California, an additional 24,000 are seriously injured.

It's one of the primary missions of law enforcement, the California Office of Traffic Safety and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to eliminate these tragedies. As part of the national *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* enforcement campaign period, law enforcement will be increasing their number of patrols, setting up DUI Checkpoints, and using local media to reach all drivers. If you're drinking and driving, the Orange County Avoid DUI Task Force will be out to find and arrest you – no warnings, no excuses. You will face jail time, fines, loss of your driver's license, towing fees, and other DUI expenses, totaling \$10,000 on average. Not to mention the humiliation among your family, friends, and workplace.

The only way to truly avoid a DUI is to drive sober. There are many ways to get home safely after drinking, and driving isn't one of them. Designate a sober driver ahead of time, or call a friend or family member. You could also use public transportation or call a taxi. The cost of cab fare is nothing compared to a \$10,000 DUI or the cost of someone's life, and the 'inconvenience' of not driving your own car home is nothing compared to the inconvenience of spending the holidays behind bars.

In addition to reminding all drivers to drive sober, local law enforcement is calling on everyone to be alert. If you see a drunk driver on the road, Report Drunk Drivers – Call 911! — you could save a life. If someone you know is about to drive after drinking, take their keys and help them get home safely. "We've got to work together to make our roads safer this December and year-round."



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Some startling data from NHTSA shows that during the holiday season in 2012, 40 percent of the drunk drivers involved in fatal crashes had at least one prior DUI on their record. And many offenders are young drivers: during that same holiday period 37 percent of the 21 to 24-year old drivers in fatal crashes were impaired. Surprisingly, almost 1 out of 6 drivers under the age of 21 in those fatal crashes were also drunk, even though they're too young to legally buy or consume alcohol.

The Orange County Avoid DUI Task Force advises Orange County drivers follow these tips to keep the holidays safe and happy:

- Under the right conditions, even one drink can impair your judgment and increase the risk of getting arrested for driving drunk—or worse, the risk of having a crash.
- If you will be drinking, do not plan on driving. Plan ahead; designate a sober driver before the party begins.
- If you have been drinking, do not drive. Call a taxi, phone a sober friend or family member or use public transportation.

Remember, it is never safe to drink and drive: *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.*

Orange County Avoid DUI Task Force funding is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The Office of Traffic Safety is offering a free mobile app – DDVIP – aimed at thanking the sober designated driver with perks and free offers at area bars and restaurants.



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