

PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

Seal Beach Police Prepare for St. Patrick's Day

Don't bet your luck on it: drunk driving is deadly driving

This St. Paddy's Day, remember: *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*

Seal Beach, CA. —St. Patrick's Day is one of America's most widely celebrated holidays, for the Irish and non-Irish alike. It's a great excuse to gather with friends and family and make merry over bangers n' mash and a pint of green beer. Sadly, the night often ends with drunk drivers on the road, which pose a threat to other drivers, vehicle passengers, and pedestrians. In 2016 alone, 60 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes during the St. Paddy's Day holiday period (6 p.m. March 16 to 5:59 a.m. March 18). Not only is this behavior deadly, it's illegal. For that reason, the Seal Beach Police Department will be out in full force to make sure that if you are behind the wheel, you are sober. This year, if you'll be drinking alcohol, remember: *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*.

Tragically, March 17 has become a dangerous holiday on our nation's roads. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), during the 2016 St. Patrick's Day holiday period, almost two-fifths (39%) of all motor vehicle crash fatalities involved drunk drivers. The early hours of March 18 didn't fare much better. Between midnight and 5:59 a.m., nearly three-fourths (69%) of all crash fatalities involved drunk drivers. In fact, from 2012 to 2016, almost two-fifths (38%) of the drunk-driving fatalities during this holiday period involved drivers who had blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) well above the .08 limit, with 269 drunk-driving fatalities total. Drivers should also keep an eye out for pedestrians who have had too much to drink. Walking while intoxicated can also be deadly, as lack of attention to their surroundings could put pedestrians at risk of getting hit by a vehicle.

"St. Patrick's Day should only be a good time for members of our community," said Chief Joe Miller. "But we need your help to make this a reality. A commitment to sober driving keeps our neighborhood roads safe. Always make a plan before heading out to the festivities. Understand the dangers of drinking and driving. It is illegal to drink and drive, and should never be an option for how you get home. Designate a sober driver before you and your friends go out to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Remember: *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*—St. Paddy's Day, and every day," Chief Miller said.

Drunk-driving death rates are staggering: In 2016, there were 10,497 people killed in drunk-driving crashes. Another way to look at it? An average of 1 person was killed every 50 minutes in a drunk-driving crash in the United States that year. Too many people are not getting the message. Drunk driving is a deadly and illegal behavior. It is inexcusable, and it is unacceptable.

The Seal Beach Police Department recommends the following safe alternatives to drinking and driving:

- First: Always remember to plan ahead. You know whether you'll attend a party. If you plan to drink, plan for a sober driver to take you home. Is it your turn to be the designated driver? Take that role seriously—your friends could be relying on you.
- Remember that it is never okay to drink and drive. Even if you've only had one alcoholic beverage, designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation to get home safely.
- The Seal Beach Lions Club will be offering free ride's home for all who ask. The Lions booth will be at Main St. and Central Ave.
- Seal Beach Police Department will be suspending parking enforcement until 9:00 A.M. March 18th. If you need to leave your car parked on Main Street or the Old Town area, you can leave it and not get a parking ticket. This is in an effort to encourage revelers to seek alternative methods of transportation.
- The Seal Beach Police Department will have increased deployment of uniformed Officers on foot patrol, as well as additional Motor Officers for targeted DUI enforcement.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact the Seal Beach Police Department by calling 911.
- Have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take the keys away and make arrangements to get them home safely.
- Uber and Lyft have designated pick-up locations at 8th Street and Central Ave. and Main St. and Ocean Ave.
- Download NHTSA's SaferRide mobile app, available on Google Play for Android devices: (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.nhtsa.SaferRide&hl=en>), and Apple's iTunes Store for iOS devices: (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/saferride/id950774008?mt=8>). SaferRide allows

users to call a taxi or a predetermined friend, and identifies the user's location so he or she can be picked up.

The goal of the Seal Beach Police Department is to provide a safe and enjoyable St. Patrick's Day celebration.