



AVOID the 21 *Fresno/Madera Counties*



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Law Enforcement Cracking Down on Drunk Drivers This Fourth of July Weekend

(Clovis, CA): July 4th celebrations often include cook-outs, picnics, boating, time spent with family and friends and, of course, fireworks. But for too many Americans, the nation's annual celebration is filled with tragedy, as it is one of the deadliest holidays of the year when it comes to alcohol-impaired traffic fatalities.

The AVOID the 21 of Fresno and Madera Counties DUI Task Force will have officers out in full force during the 4th of July holiday weekend cracking down on impaired drivers with an aggressive DUI enforcement blitz to include Sobriety/Drivers License Checkpoint(s) and DUI Saturation Patrols.

Statistics gathered from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration over the past 25 years show that, on average, nearly half of all deadly traffic crashes over each year's July 4th holiday involved some level of alcohol.

"Alcohol impairs many of the skills that safe driving requires. So we will be showing zero tolerance, and anyone caught driving with a BAC of .08 or higher will be arrested," said Lt. Alex Campos of the Clovis Police Department. "It's simply not worth the risk to you or to the thousands of innocent victims who are hurt or killed each year by drunk drivers. So if you are over the limit, you will be busted."

In fact, 410 people were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes nationally during the Fourth of July weekend in 2009. Of that number, 40 percent involved drivers with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 grams per deciliter or higher. In California, 7 were killed in DUI wrecks in 2009 while another 352 were injured in Alcohol Involved Collisions.

Lt. Campos said impaired drivers not only take the risk of hurting or killing themselves or someone else, the trauma and financial costs of an alcohol-impaired-driving crash or an arrest can be significant. Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver licenses, higher insurance rates and dozens of other unanticipated expenses.

Impaired driving is one of America's deadliest problems. In 2009 alone, 10,839 people were killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes, accounting for nearly 32 percent of all traffic-related fatalities in the United States. That's an average of one impaired-driving fatality every 48 minutes in 2009. 950 men, women and children died in a California because someone drove impaired over the legal limit.

"The summer holidays are some of the deadliest time periods on our roadways so everyone must remember to be responsible and plan ahead; use a Designated Sober Driver," said Chris Murphy, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. "Just know everyone traveling down the road near you has a cellphone and will call 9-1-1 to report a suspected drunk driver!"

Funding for the AVOID Campaign is by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. For more information on AVOID DUI Task Force campaigns, Enforcement Schedules and Daily DUI Arrest/Fatality statistics, visit the www.californiaavoid.org and www.StopImpairedDriving.org. The AVOID Campaign will deploy sobriety checkpoints and DUI patrols again during the August/Labor DUI Mobilization beginning August 19.

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MEDIA NOTES: To schedule an interview regarding the the AVOID the 21 Traffic Safety Operations, please program PIO Alfreda Sebasto at 559-285-1237 or alfreda@attglobal.net To schedule an interview regarding impaired driving efforts and programs in California please contact Chris Cochran, California Office of Traffic Safety at (916) 509-3063 or via email at ccochran@ots.ca.gov.

