

Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk

This St. Patrick's Day

Don't Depend on Dumb Luck-Designate a Sober Driver Before the Party Begins

For many Americans, St. Patrick's Day has become a popular night out to celebrate with friends and family. Unfortunately, due to the large number of drunk drivers, the night out has also become very dangerous.

On St. Patrick's Day 2008, 37 percent of the drivers and motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes had a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 or above, according to statistics by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Whether you are meeting a few friends at the local pub after work or attending a large party, if you plan on using alcohol, never drive while impaired-and never let your friends drive if you think they are impaired.

Additional NHTSA statistics show that in 2008, there were 134 crash fatalities on St. Patrick's Day. Out of that number, 50 people were killed in traffic crashes that involved at least one driver or motorcyclist with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher.

I recommend the following easy steps, for a safe St. Patrick's Day.

- Plan a safe way home before the festivities begin;
- Before drinking, please designate a sober driver and leave your keys at home;
- If you're impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use the safe ride home program if it is available.
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don't hesitate to contact your local law enforcement
- And remember, if you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

Driving impaired is simply not worth the risk. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be really significant and long lasting. Don't depend on dumb luck this St. Patrick's Day. Designate your sober driver before the party begins.

Chief Ken Muelling

Mosinee Police Department