

Police to increase patrols over St. Patrick's Day weekend

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 03/14/2019

PIKESVILLE, Md. —With St. Patrick's Day coming up on Sunday, Maryland State Police are urging those who plan to celebrate with alcohol to be safe and smart and avoid impaired, distracted and aggressive driving.

With an increase in impaired drivers expected throughout the state this weekend, state police will be conducting saturation patrols at each of the 23 barracks focusing on impaired, aggressive and distracted driving. Enforcement this weekend will be bolstered by impaired driving saturation patrol funds from the Maryland Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Office.

Initiatives will include saturation patrols in areas known to have a higher number of DUI crashes or arrests and sobriety checkpoints, which are also conducted in locations where experience indicates they are most appropriate. Additional troopers will be assigned as needed. During last year's St. Patrick's Day holiday (March 16 to 18, 2018), state police made 105 DUI arrests, 32 criminal arrests and 15 drug-related arrests. Troopers also issued 1,141 speeding citations, 90 seat belt citations and 2,700 other citations.

The State Police Impaired Driving Reduction Effort Team, otherwise known as the SPIDRE team, will also be out in full force this weekend. From March 8 to 11 alone, the SPIDRE team made 17 DUI arrests. Since its inception in May 2013, the SPIDRE team has more than 2,900 DUI arrests, 130 criminal arrests and nearly 9,000 traffic stops while also issuing close to 20,000 citations and about 4,500 warnings. The goal of the SPIDRE team is to focus on reducing alcohol related crashes in Maryland by targeting areas across the state with high crash rates involving impaired drivers.

According to the Maryland Department of Transportation, 558 people died on Maryland's roads and roughly one-third of those involved impaired driving in 2017. Impaired drivers injured 3,200 in 2017. All of these deaths and injuries were preventable.

If you are attending a St. Patrick's Day gathering:

- Designate your sober driver in advance and give that person your car keys.
- If you're planning on driving, avoid drinking.
- Consider using public transportation, call a taxi or use a ride-share service if you don't have a sober driver.
- Don't let a friend drive if you think they are impaired.
- If you see someone who you believe is driving impaired, call police.
- Always buckle up.
- Don't text, use a cellphone that is not hands-free or drive distracted.

If you are hosting a St. Patrick's Day gathering:

- Remember, you can be held liable if someone you served alcohol to ends up in an impaired-driving crash.
- Serve plenty of food and non-alcoholic beverages
- Ensure sober drivers or alternative modes of transportation are set up in advance for guest who are planning to drink alcoholic beverages.
- Have contact information for local taxi companies readily available.
- Take away the keys away from anyone who is thinking of driving impaired.