

# Press Release- Elwood Police

2019 St. Patrick's Day Weekend Campaign



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CONTACT: **Chief Fred Hayes, 815-423-5339, fred.hayes@villageofelwood.com**

## **This St. Paddy's Day, Don't Rely on the Luck o' the Irish:**

### ***Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving***

**Elwood, Illinois**—For decades, Americans across the country have come together to celebrate their Irish heritage (Irish or not) over a pint of green beer and community festivities. Sadly, all this merry-making can lead to dangerous driving conditions as party-goers head home. In 2017 alone, 59 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes over the St. Paddy's Day holiday period (6 p.m. March 16 to 5:59 a.m. March 18). The selfish act of drinking and driving can rip people from their friends and loved ones forever. For this reason, Chief Fred Hayes is working to spread the message about the dangers of drunk driving. Even one drink can be one too many. If you're heading out for the Irish festivities, plan ahead and remember: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*.

Tragically, March 17 has become a dangerous holiday on our nation's roads. According to the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, during the 2017 St. Patrick's Day holiday period, more than one-third (37%) of all motor vehicle crash fatalities involved drunk drivers. The early hours of March 18, 2017, were the most dangerous. Between midnight and 5:59 a.m., three-fourths (75%) of all crash fatalities involved drunk drivers. In fact, from 2013 to 2017, over one-third (35%) of the drunk-driving fatalities during this holiday period involved drivers who had blood alcohol concentrations well above the .08 limit, with 234 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 be a fun holiday for our community members, but we expect everyone to take responsibility for their actions," said Chief Hayes. "Whether you're driving yourself or your friends, make sure you stay sober or plan for a sober ride home. Remember: It's not just about you. There are other people on the roads who want to get where they are going safely. Don't let alcohol cause you to be a risk to yourself and others on the road. Drinking and driving is an act of selfishness. Before you put your keys in the ignition, remind yourself: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*. If you feel a buzz, you are in no shape to drive." Drunk driving isn't the only risk on the road: Drug-impaired driving is also an increasing problem on our nation's roads. If drivers are impaired by any substance—alcohol or drugs—they should not get behind the wheel of a vehicle. Driving while impaired is illegal, period. The bottom line is this: *If You Feel Different, You Drive Different*. It's that simple.

Drinking and driving should never be combined. It's essential to plan a sober ride in advance if the holiday celebration will include alcohol. The alternative could change your life, not to mention the lives of your passengers, of pedestrians, or of other drivers and passengers nearby.

This holiday season, **The Elwood Police Department** and NHTSA urge drivers to designate a sober driver before heading out for the evening. If you plan on drinking, plan on not driving.

## Party with a Plan

First and foremost: Plan ahead. 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 are relying on you.

- Remember that it is never okay to drink and drive. Even if you've had only one alcoholic beverage, designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.
- 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.
- Use local private drivers such as a **Taxi, 'Uber', or 'Lyft'**
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact **the Elwood Police Department immediately**
- Have a friend who is about to drive after drinking? Take the keys away and make arrangements to get your friend home safely.

If you are buzzed, do not drive. *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*. For more information, visit [www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov](http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov).

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