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Don't Push Your Luck on St. Patrick's Day

If you are out celebrating, plan to Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over

SPRINGFIELD – As St. Patrick's Day approaches, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Illinois State Police and more than 150 local law enforcement agencies throughout the state remind motorists to avoid pressing their luck, celebrate responsibly and never get behind the wheel after drinking.

St. Patrick's Day has long celebrated the roots of Americans with Irish ancestry, often including daylong drinking festivities at parades, pubs and house parties. These celebrations can turn deadly if someone chooses to drink and drive.

Beginning this weekend, through St. Patrick's Day and the following weekend, Illinois law enforcement will be working overtime to crack down on drunk drivers. Officers will be conducting roadside safety checks, planning saturation patrols and strongly enforcing seatbelt laws to remind motorists to "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" and "Click It or Ticket."

Nine people lost their lives in motor-vehicle crashes on March 17 between 2011 and 2015, with two of the fatalities involving at least one driver who had been drinking. In addition, three fatalities occurred in the early morning hours of March 18 during the same years from midnight to 6 a.m., with two of the fatalities involving at least one driver who had been drinking, according to IDOT data.

The luck of the Irish won't protect you from the risks of drunk driving. Motorists can do their part this St. Patrick's Day by following these simple rules:

- Plan ahead. Designate your sober driver before the party begins.
- If you've been drinking, call a taxi, use mass transit or call a sober friend to pick you up.
- Promptly report drunk drivers to law enforcement.
- Wear your seat belt and make sure all passengers are safely bucked up. It is your best defense against a drunk driver.
- If you are hosting a party, serve plenty of food and non-alcoholic beverages. Never let your guests drive home after drinking.

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