



State of Illinois
Bruce Rauner, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation
Randall S. Blankenhorn, Secretary

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CONTACT:
Gianna Urgo 312.814.4693
Kelsea Gurski 217.782.3030

On St. Patrick's Day, a Sober Driver is Your Lucky Charm

Plan ahead; police preparing to be out in force due to holiday on a Saturday

SPRINGFIELD – With the green beer about to flow and St. Patrick's Day revelers preparing to drown the shamrock this weekend, the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police and local law enforcement agencies throughout the state are teaming up to remind motorists to drive sober and plan ahead. If your celebration involves alcohol, designate a sober driver, take public transit or call a cab or ride-sharing service.

“With St. Patrick's Day falling on a Saturday this year, even more people will be out celebrating and potentially putting themselves and others at risk,” said Illinois Transportation Deputy Secretary Omer Osman. “It is your responsibility to plan ahead so that you – and others on the road – arrive home safely.”

Starting Thursday evening, police throughout the state will step up patrols focused on stopping impaired drivers. Law enforcement will conduct roadside safety checks, seat belt enforcement zones and saturation patrols through Monday, March 19.

“If alcohol is part of your St. Patrick's Day celebration, a designated driver should be too,” said Illinois State Police Director Leo P. Schmitz. “The Illinois State Police will have additional patrols over the holiday weekend to focus on removing impaired drivers from Illinois roadways. Don't depend on luck to get you home safely this St. Patrick's Day. Depend on a sober driver.”

A total of 61 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes on the weekends prior to, and after, March 17 from 2013 to 2017. Fifteen of the fatalities involved at least one driver who had been drinking. In 2017 alone, 15 people were killed during those two weekends and four died as a result of crashes involving at least one driver who had been drinking.

The St. Patrick's Day “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” campaign is funded by federal traffic safety funds administered through the Illinois Department of Transportation.

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