

ST. PATRICK'S DAY MINI-PLANNER TALKING POINTS

Don't Depend on Luck, Designate a Sober Driver for St. Patrick's Day

- Americans who drive impaired on St. Patrick's Day make it a high-risk evening on the nation's roadways due to impaired driving.
- In 2003 32% of accidents on St. Patrick's Day were due impaired drivers with a blood alcohol level of 0.08% and above.
- But much of this tragedy can be prevented by reminding all drivers of a few simple precautions:
- If you are attending a St. Patrick's Day Party:
 - Designate your sober driver before the party begins and give that person your car keys;
 - Don't starve yourself before or during the party. Enjoy the food as well as the drink;
 - Avoid drinking too much alcohol too fast. Pace yourself – eat, take breaks, alternate with non-alcoholic drinks;
 - If impaired, don't even think about getting behind the wheel. Ask a sober friend for a ride home; call a cab, friend or family member to come and get you, call your local sober rides program, use mass transit, or stay where you are and sleep it off until you are sober;
 - And remember, *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*. Take the keys and never let a friend leave your sight if you think they are about to drive while impaired.
- If you are hosting a St. Patrick's Day party:
 - Serve lots of food -- particularly high-protein dishes -- and be sure to include lots of non-alcoholic beverages;
 - Be sure all of your guests designate their drivers in advance, or help arrange ride-sharing with sober drivers;
 - Keep the numbers for local cab companies handy, and take the keys away from anyone who is thinking of driving while impaired.

Impaired Driving is a Deadly Problem

- Impaired driving is one of America's deadliest problems. Nationally, in 2003, more than 17,000 people died in impaired driving-related highway crashes. Hundreds of thousands more were injured.
- Every 30 minutes, nearly 50 times a day, someone in America dies in an impaired driving-related crash. This means you, your friends, your family are regularly at risk.
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), about three in every ten Americans will be involved in an impaired driving crash at some point in their lives.
- The rate of alcohol involvement in a fatal crash is more than three times as high at night than in other time periods.
- Although national impaired driving highway fatalities during 2003 declined slightly for the first time in several years (down three percent from 2002), there is still much more work to be done.
- Too many people still don't understand that alcohol, drugs and driving don't mix. Impaired driving is no accident – nor is it a victimless crime.
- Legislators and law enforcement officials are becoming even more vigilant in combating impaired driving. 2004 marked the first year that .08 blood alcohol content (BAC) laws have been enacted in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Impaired Driving Creates Serious Consequences

- The tragedies and costs from drinking and driving impaired do not just end at the potential death, disfigurement, disability and injury caused by impaired drivers.
- Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is not worth the risk. The consequences are serious and real. 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 not the way you want to spend your St. Patrick's Day.
- Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver's license, higher insurance rates, and dozens of other unanticipated expenses from attorney fees, other fines and court costs, car towing and repairs, lost time at work, etc.
- Plus, there is the added embarrassment, humiliation, and potential loss and consequence after informing family, friends, and employers.
- So remember – Don't Depend on Luck, Designate a Sober Driver for St. Patrick's Day

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