# 2023 St. Patrick’s Day *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*

### FACT SHEET & TALKING POINTS

This year, St. Patrick’s Day — March 17, 2023 — falls on a Friday. The celebratory day is one of the biggest drinking occasions of the year, and this, unfortunately, means more drunk drivers on the roads. With the holiday falling on a Friday, we can expect a fairly dangerous weekend for drivers and passengers alike. If you plan to drink, make sure you refrain from driving and make a plan to get home safely. Review these facts and share the word about the dangers of drunk driving so you can continue merry-making for all the St. Paddy’s Days to come.

* St. Patrick’s Day is one of the deadliest times on our nation’s roads. During the 2016-2020 St. Patrick’s Day holiday period (6 p.m. March 16 to 5:59 a.m. March 18), 287 lives were lost in drunk-driving crashes. In 2020, more than 11,000 people in our country died in drunk-driving crashes, and every single one of those deaths was preventable. Do your part this St. Patrick’s Day: Plan for a sober driver to ensure you get home safely.
* In 2020 alone, 37 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes over the St. Patrick’s Day holiday period (6 p.m. March 16 to 5:59 a.m. March 18).
* Between the hours of 6 p.m. and 5:59 a.m. over the St. Patrick’s Day holiday period in 2020, 31 crash fatalities involved a drunk driver.
* Approximately one-third of all traffic crash fatalities in the United States involve drunk drivers (with BACs at or above .08). In 2020, there were 11,654 people killed in drunk-driving crashes.
* Nationally, it is illegal to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher, except in Utah, where the limit is .05 g/dL.
* Although it’s illegal to drive when impaired by alcohol, in 2020 one person was killed every 45 minutes in a drunk-driving crash on our nation’s roads.
* The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2020 was 3.1 times higher at night than during the day.
* **[Local holiday statistic if available.]**

**The Cost of Drunk Driving**

* The financial impact from impaired-driving crashes is devastating. Based on 2010 numbers (the most recent year for which cost data is available), impaired-driving crashes cost the United States $44 billion annually.
* Drinking and driving is a risk no one should take. Doing so can cause injury or death to the driver, passengers, and others on the road. The consequences of drunk driving could be life-altering.

**Plan for a Safe Celebration**

Always remember to plan ahead when you will be celebrating with alcohol. If you plan to drink, make arrangements for a sober driver to take you home. Before you start celebrating this holiday season, look over these safety tips to keep you, your loved ones, and everyone else safe on the road.

* Plan ahead: If you wait until you’ve been drinking to make a smart decision, you might not. Before you have one drink, designate a sober driver who won’t be drinking.
* You have options: designate a sober driver, call a taxi, or use a rideshare service. Getting home safely is always worth it. Some communities even have a sober ride program **[insert local sober ride details here].**
* If it’s your turn to be the designated driver, take your job seriously and don’t drink.
* If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact **[Local Law Enforcement].**
* Do you have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take the keys away and let a sober driver get your friend home safely.

For more information about the *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving* campaign, visit [www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving](https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving).