**2024 ST. PATRICK’S DAY CAMPAIGN**

**SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE**

**SOCIAL NORMING VERSION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Date]**

**CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, Email Address]**

**Note: Before filling in the names of the organization and organization spokesperson, you MUST contact them for permission to use their names in this press release. Also, you must get their approval for the language of their quotations, and any changes or additions they may require. Only after this is done should you issue the press release.**

### Plan for a Sober Driver This St. Patrick’s Day

**Remember: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving***

**[City, State]** — St. Patrick’s Day celebrations in the United States extend as far back as the American colonial period. Today, it is one of our nation’s most popular holidays, celebrated with festivals, parades, and parties. These celebrations frequently feature themed cocktails and green pints, and the amount of alcohol consumed on this holiday is higher than average. People are more likely to make poor decisions as a result, including driving while intoxicated. To spread the message about the dangers of drunk driving and to help keep your community’s streets safe, **[State/Local Organization]** is teaming up with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Remember before and throughout the celebrations: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*.

St. Patrick’s Day can be a dangerous day on America’s roads due to increased alcohol consumption and drunk driving. There were 272 lives lost in drunk-driving crashes over the holiday period (6:00 p.m. March 16 to 5:59 a.m. March 18) between 2017 and 2021. Though drunk-driving fatalities are more likely to occur at night, drunk driving puts people’s lives in danger at any time of the day. During that same period, there were 31 daytime drunk-driving fatalities.

“Because St. Patrick’s Day falls on a Sunday this year, we anticipate that alcohol consumption will increase both on that day and throughout the weekend. We ask everyone to celebrate responsibly. That should begin even before you go out to celebrate by deciding who will be your sober designated driver or whether you’ll be using a ride-sharing service or taxi,” said **[Local Official]**.

“Not only is drunk driving illegal with serious financial consequences, but it is also deadly for the intoxicated driver and for other people on the road, including passengers, pedestrians, and sober drivers,” said **[Local Official]**. According to NHTSA, 13,384 individuals died in alcohol-impaired motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2021 alone, accounting for 31% of all traffic fatalities in the United States that year. This means that someone died in a drunk driving crash every 39 minutes on our nation’s roads in 2021.

“Don’t turn a day of fun and enjoyment into a tragic and devastating time by driving while intoxicated. Have a sober driver take you home or use a cab or ride-sharing service to get home safely,” said **[Local Official].**

Nationally, it is illegal to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher, except in Utah, where the limit is .05 g/dL. And the costs can be financial, too: If you’re caught drinking and driving, you could face jail time, lose your driver’s license and your vehicle, and pay up to $10,000 in attorney’s fees, fines, car towing, higher insurance rates, and lost wages.

No one should mix drinking and driving, and no one is immune to the effects of drunk driving. If you find yourself drunk and stranded with your vehicle, give your keys to a sober driver who can safely drive you home. Remind your friends to never get in the vehicle with a drunk driver. If you have a friend who is about to drive drunk, take away their keys and help them get home safely. Don’t worry about offending someone — you might be saving their life, or someone else’s. Always have a plan before you head out for the evening. If you wait until after you’ve been drinking to figure out how to get from one place to the next, you may already be too impaired to make the right choices.

There are plenty of options to help impaired drivers get home safely, such as designating a sober driver or calling a taxi or rideshare. If available, use your community’s sober ride program [Insert your local sober ride program specifics here]. If you see a drunk driver on the road, do not hesitate to contact **[Local Law Enforcement]**.

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).