



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Motorists Warned Not To Depend on The Luck Of The Irish To Get Home Safe**

*Georgia law enforcement will be stepping up St. Patrick's Day DUI patrols*

**(ATLANTA)** - For the Irish and non-Irish alike, St. Patrick's Day means wearing green and even drinking green beer, but revelers will be losing green if they violate Georgia's zero tolerance policy towards impaired driving this holiday weekend. That's because a DUI, which includes no warning and a trip straight to jail, can cost up to \$10,000 in fines, lawyers, court fees and lost wages.

However, it's not the potential financial cost, but rather human cost of impaired driving that has the Governor's Office of Highway Safety once again joining safe and sober driving coalition TEAM Georgia, the Georgia Department of Public Safety and the Georgia Department of Transportation to encourage everyone to plan ahead for a sober ride if their St. Patrick's celebration is going to include alcohol.

"There are going to be St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Savannah, Dublin, and other places around our great state," Governor's Office of Highway Safety Law Enforcement Services Director Roger Hayes said. "The one place we don't want people to celebrate is behind the wheel of a motor vehicle if they have been drinking. From ride share services to taxi cabs to designated drivers, plan a safe, sober ride well before the party begins."

During St. Patrick's Day weekend, law enforcement will be looking to prevent crashes and save lives by taking drunk and drugged drivers off the road because according to the Georgia Department of Transportation, 12 people were killed last year in 3,137 crashes that happened over the three-day St. Patrick's Day weekend in Georgia. 119 of the crashes that happened over the St. Patrick's Day weekend were caused by drunk or drugged drivers.

"Spring should be a time for renewal and re-dedication to safety on Georgia's roadways and waterways," TEAM Georgia Chairman Ron Fennel said. "St. Patrick's Day is a harbinger of a happy season. Such holidays are meant for joyous celebration, not mourning."

And while popular drinking celebrations like St. Patrick's Day and New Years are used to highlight the dangers of impaired driving, it's not just the holidays when it's a problem. According to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, alcohol was a factor in one-out-of-four traffic deaths in Georgia in 2017.

One tool that can help those who've been drinking find a sober ride is NHTSA's SAFERide mobile app, which allows users to use their location to call a taxi or friend to pick them up. The app is free and available in Google Play and the iTunes store. AAA's Tow-To-Go will also once again offer free rides and tows with no questions asked for up to 10 miles from March 15 through 6:00 a.m. on March 18.

"Drinking and driving is a mistake that can never be corrected when someone is killed or permanently injured because of a crash," Hayes said. "You will enjoy whatever event you are celebrating more by not having to worry how you are going to get home and having a sober ride arranged before the party begins."

For more information on how you can join TEAM Georgia's efforts to promote safe and sober driving, call 770-490-1243 or visit their website [www.teamgeorgia.net](http://www.teamgeorgia.net). More information on the Governor's Office of Highway Safety can be found on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/gahighwaysafety](http://www.facebook.com/gahighwaysafety), on Twitter at @gohsgeorgia and on our website [www.gahighwaysafety.org](http://www.gahighwaysafety.org).

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