



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association Urges Safe and Sober Driving This St. Patrick's Day Weekend**

PROVIDENCE — The Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association reports that law enforcement agencies across the state are increasing the number of patrols targeting impaired driving and seat belt use around the St. Patrick's Day holiday, and reminds motorists of important safe driving tips from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

St. Patrick's Day is a popular occasion for drinking, which often leads to more drunk drivers on the road. Officers from multiple departments were out on the roads on March 11 for the St. Patrick's Day parade in Newport looking out for impaired and reckless drivers. The Rhode Island DUI Task Force, made up of officers in cities and towns across the state, is also conducting targeted impaired driving patrols through March 18.

[According to the NHTSA](#), during the 2016-2020 St. Patrick's Day holiday period — 6 p.m. on March 16 to 5:59 a.m. on March 18 — 287 people nationwide were killed in drunk driving crashes. In 2020 alone, 37 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes over the St. Patrick's Day holiday period.

Law enforcement agencies across the state are also participating in Rhode Island's St. Patrick's Day Click It or Ticket mobilization, coordinated by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation's Office on Highway Safety, which runs through March 19.

As part of the Click It or Ticket mobilization, participating agencies step up their enforcement of seat belt use and work to educate drivers on the importance of seat belts in an effort to lessen unbelted serious injuries and fatalities on roadways statewide.

### **Reminders for Safe Driving**

- Never drive if you have been drinking or are under the influence of drugs.
- Make a plan ahead of time for a sober ride home. Designate a sober driver, or plan to use public transportation or a ride share service.
- Designated drivers should take their role seriously. Refrain from any alcoholic beverages or other drugs.
- Watch out for your family and friends. If someone you know is impaired and planning to drive, take their keys and make arrangements to get them home safely.
- Never get into a vehicle if the driver is impaired.
- If you see an impaired driver on the road, safely pull over and call 911.
- Don't drive distracted. Before driving, turn your phone off and put it out of reach. If you have to make a call or send a text, pull over.
- Drivers should also keep an eye out for pedestrians who have had too much to drink. Walking while intoxicated can also be deadly; lack of attention to surroundings could put pedestrians at risk of getting hit by a vehicle.

Some agencies in Rhode Island offer a "safe rides" program for St. Patrick's Day. Residents can contact their local police department to see if they offer a similar program.

Visit [nhtsa.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov) for more safe driving information.

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A message from the Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association