

ST. PATRICK'S DAY PLANNER
SOCIAL NORMING VERSION
SAMPLE OpEd
399 Words



Remember: Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving
This St. Patrick's Day
Designate a Sober Driver Before the Party Begins

In 2005, 59 percent of all traffic fatalities that occurred during the evening of St. Patrick's Day to the early hours of the following morning involved drivers with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of .01 and higher. Of those, 89 percent involved a driver with a BAC of .08 or higher. This year, the risk may be even greater since St. Patrick's Day festivities will take place on a Saturday night.

That's why **[Local Organization]** announced today a strong push to remind all St. Patrick's Day partiers that *Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving* and to never forget to designate a sober driver before the festivities begin.

For a safer St. Patrick's Day, we want to provide these simple reminders:

- Plan ahead: Whenever you plan on consuming alcohol, designate your sober driver before going out and give that person your keys;
- If you're impaired, call a taxi, use mass transit or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely;
- Use your community's Sober Rides program **[insert your local Sober Rides specifics here]**;
- Promptly report drunk drivers you see on the roadways to law enforcement;
- And remember, *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*. If you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

Impaired driving is no accident – nor is it a victimless crime. In 2005, nearly 13,000 people died in highway crashes involving a driver or a motorcycle operator with a BAC of .08 or higher, according to NHTSA.

Driving any vehicle – including a motorcycle – when buzzed is simply wrong and not worth the risk. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for drunk driving are significant.

Whether you are meeting a few friends at the local pub or attending the **[big local parade/party]**, if you plan on using alcohol, never drive while impaired—and never let your friends drive if you think they are impaired. It's easy to tell if you've had way too many, but even if you've had one too many, you shouldn't drive. Make smart decisions. Designate your sober driver in advance. And remember, *Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving*. Don't push your luck this St. Patrick's Day.

For more information, please visit www.StopImpairedDriving.org.

###