



MEDIA RELEASE

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Ohio Department of Public Safety • Henry Guzmán, Director
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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ODPS: MAKE SURE HALLOWEEN PLANS INCLUDE A SOBER DRIVER

Law Enforcement, Safety Partners Work to Remind Motorists to Make Plans in Advance

(COLUMBUS) – Halloween is a much-loved fall tradition that is enjoyed by people of all ages. But irresponsible celebrating can quickly spoil a fun evening. That is why the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) and partners around the state will be out this Halloween cracking down on drunk drivers to remind everyone that: You Drink and Drive, You Lose!

“Halloween should be a time for scary costumes, trick or treating with the kids and family fun,” said ODPS Director Henry Guzmán. “But unfortunately, Halloween can become a dangerous and deadly night of the year due to impaired driving and we want to ensure no one’s celebration is ruined.”

In 2007, there were eight deaths and 119 injuries in alcohol-related crashes on Ohio’s roads during the weekend preceding Halloween (Oct. 26 -28). This year, Oct. 31 falls on a Friday, making this coming weekend the official Halloween celebration weekend. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported that 44 percent of all highway fatalities across the nation on Halloween night (6 p.m. Oct. 31 to 5:59 a.m. Nov. 1) involved a driver or a motorcycle rider with a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher, which is illegal in every state.

As a clear reminder that drunk or unsafe driving will not be tolerated, 66 local law enforcement agencies have planned more than 2,000 hours of enforcement as well as at least 13 checkpoints and more than 1,000 hours of saturation patrols around the state. The Ohio State Highway Patrol will have a visible presence on the state’s highways. Other partners including the Ohio Investigative Unit and the Ohio Traffic Safety Office (divisions of ODPS) along with Safe Community organizations have been out at community events and in liquor permit premises reminding people and establishment owners that over-serving is against the law and to always designate a sober driver. During the weekend, OIU agents will be focusing on permit premises looking for underage drinking and over-serving violations throughout the state. Agents will also be working with local OVI/DUI task forces, looking for the source of alcohol.

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Oct. 29, 2008

Page Two

Following these simple tips can help ensure that everyone enjoys their Halloween celebration:

- Plan a safe way home **before** the festivities begin; designate a sober driver and give that person your keys;
- If you're impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation so you are sure to get home safely;
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, don't hesitate to contact local law enforcement or I-800-GRAB-DUI for the Highway Patrol on state highways.
- Drink Responsibly – Your bartender or your friends are not monsters for refusing to serve you – over-serving is against the law.
- Don't drink if you're not 21.

“Real-life Halloween nightmares are simple to avoid if you make smart decisions. Never drive drunk. Designate your sober driver in advance. No exceptions. No excuses, if you drink and drive, you lose.” said Guzmán.

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ODPS works to reduce alcohol-related deaths and injuries on Ohio's roads through the coordinated efforts of all of its Divisions. The Ohio Investigative Unit enforces liquor, tobacco and food stamp laws in liquor permit premises and the Ohio State Highway Patrol enforces traffic laws. The Ohio Traffic Safety Office (OTSO) funds the efforts of OVI Task Forces and other grants for law enforcement to combat impaired and unsafe driving. OTSO also promotes educational programs, coalition-building efforts and campaigns focused on highway safety.