



MEDIA RELEASE

Investigative Unit

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OIU agents to bars and party hosts: Be responsible during March celebrations

(Columbus) – For many Ohio restaurants and bars, St. Patrick's Day and college basketball tournaments often mean large crowds consuming alcohol for multiple hours. Agents with the Ohio Department of Public Safety's Ohio Investigative Unit want liquor permit owners to know – *Your Bar, Your Responsibility*.

As bar patrons participate the revelry, permit staff need to be proactive by not serving intoxicated individuals and discouraging excessive consumption of alcohol. It is illegal to serve, sell or furnish alcohol to someone who is intoxicated.

"There is an element of personal responsibility, however, there is a responsibility on behalf of the bar or the party host not to serve alcohol to an already intoxicated person," said Agent-in-Charge Eric Wolf.

Liquor permit premises also need to be on the lookout for underage customers attempting to purchase alcohol.

During last year's St. Patrick's Day celebrations agents were asked to conduct a trace-back investigation after a 20-year-old driver and three passengers crashed into a Niles Police Department cruiser and then fled the scene. The driver was located a short distance away. The driver's BAC was .177 – more than twice the legal limit.

The trace-back investigation revealed that the driver and passengers were served alcohol at The Split Level in Youngstown. Agents administratively cited the liquor permit with furnishing and also sale of beer to a person under 21. The bartender was found guilty of furnishing alcohol to a minor and was fined \$500. Administrative citations against the liquor permit are pending before the Liquor Control Commission. Administrative penalties may include a fine, suspension or revocation of the liquor permit.

To report selling alcohol to an intoxicated or underage person, call #677.

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The Ohio Investigative Unit agents are plain-clothed fully sworn peace officers. OIU is charged with enforcing the state's liquor laws and is the only state law enforcement agency specifically tasked with investigating food stamp fraud crimes. Agents also investigate tobacco violations.

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