



For Immediate Release
August 16, 2017

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This Labor Day, HPD Reminds Citizens to *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* In Effort to End Drunk Driving

Harrisonburg, VA – The end of summer is traditionally marked by the Labor Day holiday, a time for our country to reflect on the hard work of our fellow Americans. The long weekend is typically celebrated through picnics, pool parties, and barbecues, as families and friends enjoy the last few days of summer before fall approaches. Sadly, the Labor Day holiday is also one of the deadliest, with drunk drivers endangering themselves and others on America’s roadways.

This year, the Harrisonburg Police Department (HPD) is partnering with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to stop drunk drivers and help save lives. The high-visibility national enforcement campaign, *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*, runs from August 16 through September 4, 2017. During this period, local law enforcement will show zero tolerance for drunk driving. Increased state and national messages about the dangers of driving impaired, coupled with enforcement and increased officers on the road, aim to drastically reduce drunk driving on our nation’s roadways.

Statistics show a frightening trend in drunk-driving. According to NHTSA, 10,265 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes in 2015, an increase from the 9,967 people killed in 2014. On average, 10,000 people were killed each year from 2011 to 2015—one person killed every 51 minutes in 2015. That’s the equivalent of 20 jumbo jets crashing each year, with no survivors. This is why Harrisonburg City Police Department is working with NHTSA to remind drivers that drunk driving is not only illegal, it is a matter of life and death. As you head out to Labor Day festivities, remember: *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*.

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“We’re stressing the dangers of driving impaired to our community,” said Corporal Westfall Jr. “Drunk driving is a massive problem in the United States, with more than 10,000 people dying annually. If you’re out on the roads and you see someone driving drunk, please call us. You could help save a life,” he said.

Over the Labor Day holiday period in 2015, there were 460 crash fatalities nationwide. Forty percent of those fatal crashes involved drivers who had been drinking (.01+ BAC). Of those alcohol-related fatal crashes, one third (33%) involved drivers who were drunk (.08+ BAC), and nearly one-fourth (23%) involved drivers who were driving with a BAC almost twice the legal limit (.15+ BAC). Nighttime is the most dangerous time to be out on the roads. During the 2015 Labor Day period, 78 percent of drunk-driving crash fatalities occurred between 6 p.m. and 5:59 a.m. – as compared to half of all drunk-driving crash fatalities during the rest of the year.

HPD and NHTSA are reminding citizens of the many resources available to get them home safely. “Drunk driving is not acceptable behavior,” said Corporal Westfall Jr. “It is essential to plan a sober ride home before you ever leave for the party. That’s why, during the Labor Day holiday; we will make zero exceptions for drunk driving. There are just no excuses.”

HPD encourages individuals to follow the tips below:

- Remember that it is never okay to drink and drive. Even if you’ve had one alcoholic beverage, designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation to get home safely.
- Download NHTSA’s SaferRide mobile app available on Google Play for Android devices: (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.nhtsa.SaferRide&hl=en>), and Apple’s iTunes Store for IOS devices: (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/saferride/id950774008?mt=8>). SaferRide allows users to call a taxi or a predetermined friend, and identifies the user’s location so he or she can be picked up.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact The Harrisonburg Rockingham Emergency Communication center at 540 434-4436.
- Have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take the keys away and make arrangements to get your friend home safely.

For more information about the *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* campaign, visit www.TrafficSafetyMarketing.gov.

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