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This St. Paddy's Day, Don't Rely on the Luck o' the Irish: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*

Harrisonburg, Va. - Americans across the country will come together this week to celebrate their Irish heritage (Irish or not) over a pint of green beer and community festivities. Sadly, all this merry-making can lead to dangerous driving conditions as party-goers head home. According to the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration more than one-third (37%) of all motor vehicle crash fatalities involved drunk drivers. In 2017 alone, 59 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes over the St. Patrick's Day holiday period (6 p.m. March 16 to 5:59 a.m. March 18). For this reason, HPD is working to spread the message about the dangers of drunk driving. If you're heading out for the Irish festivities, plan ahead, and remember: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*.

"St. Patrick's Day should be a fun holiday for our community members, but we expect everyone to take responsibility for their actions," said HPD Traffic Supervisor Wayne Westfall. "Whether you're driving yourself or your friends, make sure you stay sober or plan for a sober ride home. Before you put your keys in the ignition, remind yourself: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*. If you feel a buzz, you are in no shape to drive."

Drinking and driving should never be combined. It's essential to plan a sober ride in advance if the holiday celebration will include alcohol. The alternative could change your life, not to mention the lives of your passengers, of pedestrians, or of other drivers and passengers nearby.

This holiday season, the Harrisonburg Police Department and NHTSA urge drivers to designate a sober driver before heading out for the evening. HPD will have extra patrols out this St. Paddy's Day weekend, so if you plan on drinking, plan on not driving.

For more information, visit www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov.

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