



## SAN MATEO POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## MEDIA RELEASE / COMMUNITY ALERT

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### DON'T RELY ON LUCK: BE SMART, CHOOSE A SOBER WAY TO GO THIS ST. PATRICK'S DAY!

San Mateo, CA – St. Patrick's Day is a time to celebrate with friends, family and good cheer. However, as the festivities often include alcohol, the San Mateo Police Department is urging everyone to prioritize safety and avoid driving under the influence. Don't rely on luck—plan ahead and make sure you have a sober way to get home.

In 2022 alone, there were 74 drunk-driving fatalities during the St. Patrick's Day holiday, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). More than 13,500 preventable deaths throughout 2022 involved drunk driving, representing 32% of all traffic fatalities in the United States that year.

Officers will be looking for drivers suspected of driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

"Celebrating St. Patrick's Day responsibly is about protecting not just yourself but everyone on the road," says Traffic Sergeant Nick Ryan. "Let's work together to make this celebration memorable for all the right reasons. Make a plan for a safe ride home."

#### Plan for a Safe Celebration

Before heading out for St. Patrick's Day festivities, follow these tips to stay safe:

- **Designate a Sober Driver:** Choose someone ahead of time who will stay alcohol-free and make sure everyone gets home safely.
- **Use Ride-Sharing Services or Public Transportation:** Apps and transit options are great alternatives to driving if you've been drinking.
- **Look Out for Others:** Don't let friends or family members drive impaired. Take their keys and help arrange a safe, sober ride.
- **Stay Alert:** Watch for impaired drivers on the road and report them to local law enforcement by calling (650)522-7700 or 911 in an emergency.

San Mateo PD reminds the public that impaired driving is not just from alcohol. Prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, cannabis products and other drugs may also cause impairment. If you plan on drinking or taking medications with a driving warning label, let someone who is sober drive.

Funding for this program is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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