



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For release: March 12, 2012

Contact: Sherry Llewellyn, Bryce Buell
410-313-2236

Howard County police to conduct sobriety checkpoint *Focus on traffic safety during St. Patrick's Day weekend*

The Howard County Police Department will conduct a sobriety checkpoint at an undisclosed location this weekend to promote awareness and reduce the number of alcohol-impaired drivers on the roads. The checkpoint is part of the agency's traffic safety initiative to keep county roads safe for residents and travelers.

The checkpoint will be clearly marked with signs, lights and uniformed officers. Officers will utilize both marked and unmarked vehicles and will be checking for violations including driving under the influence of alcohol, failure to use seat belts and failure to use child safety seats.

The department conducts several checkpoints throughout the year, in addition to utilizing special enforcement details specifically targeting drunken and drugged drivers.

For many Americans, St. Patrick's Day has become a popular night out to celebrate with friends and family. Unfortunately, due to the large number of drunk drivers, the night out has also become very dangerous.

On St. Patrick's Day 2010, 37 percent of the drivers and motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes had a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 or above, according to statistics by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Additional NHTSA statistics show that in 2010, there were 103 crash fatalities on St. Patrick's Day. Out of that number, 39 people were killed in traffic crashes that involved at least one driver or motorcyclist with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher.

In 2011, Howard County Police arrested 1,391 individuals for driving under the influence. In 2011, 25 percent of Howard County's fatal collisions were alcohol related.

Checkpoints conducted by Howard County police are part of Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign and are funded in part by a grant from the Maryland Highway Safety Office. HCPD conducts checkpoints in partnership with Maryland State Police and with support from Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

Traffic crashes continue to be a leading cause of death for Maryland residents. Police urge drivers to always drive sober, obey the speed limit, wear a seat belt and eliminate distractions. If you see a drunken driver on the road, please call 911. You might just save a life.

###