

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plan On Getting Drunk? Designate A Sober Driver As V.I.P.D. Sets To Crackdown On Drunk-Driving

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ST. CROIX -- In its annual effort to prevent drunk driving-related accidents and fatalities, the Virgin Islands Police Department's Office of Highway Safety, during a press conference at the force's Frederiksted headquarters on Wednesday, announced its initiative -- Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over -- which starts on August 19 and runs through September 5.

The high-visibility campaign is a partnership with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to curb impaired driving and save lives. During the aforementioned period -- including Labor Day Weekend when many drunk driving-related accidents and fatalities occur -- law enforcement partners nationwide will show zero

tolerance for drunk driving.

Increased state and national messaging about the dangers of driving drunk, coupled with checkpoints and increased officers on the road, aim to drastically reduce the toll of drunk



Traffic Commander Lt. Joseph Platt.

"Our focus is to target drunk drivers during that time," said Traffic Commander Lt. Joseph Platt.

He listed a myriad of U.S. drunk driving statistics, as well as local numbers.

"In 2016 here on St. Croix we've had two fatal accidents as a result of drunk driving," Lt. Platt said (video clip [here](#)). He said there could possibly be a third but the V.I.P.D. is awaiting test results to make a final determination.

From January 2016 to present, the V.I.P.D. has had 25 drunk driving-related arrests, Lt. Platt revealed, and from October 1, 2015 to present, the force has arrested 30 drunk drivers.

Lt. Platt said aside from the two homicides, drunk drivers have caused injuries to their victims and have also damaged the properties of victims (most likely vehicles).

Drunk-Driving Fatality Statistics

In 2013, there were 10,076 people killed nationally in drunk-driving crashes, almost a third of all traffic fatalities, while 39 percent of crash fatalities on Labor Day weekend that year involved drunk drivers (with blood alcohol concentrations (BACs of .08 or higher), amounting to 161 lives lost. Also, more than a quarter (27%) of the crash fatalities that occurred on Labor Day weekend involved drivers with BACs of .15 or higher—almost twice the [illegal per se limit](#).

Of the 10,076 people who were killed in impaired-driving crashes in 2013, 65 percent were the drunk drivers themselves. Those 6,515 drunk drivers planned on making it to their destinations, but they didn't.

In every state, it's illegal to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher. The Office of Highway Safety wants to remind US Virgin Islands drivers that it's not a recommendation; it's the law; and during the enforcement period starting August 21, there will be a special emphasis on drunk-driving enforcement.

Local drivers should expect to see more patrol vehicles, DUI checkpoints and increased messaging about the preventable crime of drunk-driving. Locally, between 2010-2014 there were 898 impaired driving arrests made, 488 DUI related crashes, including 7 fatalities.

[View the original embedded media](#)

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