

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Expect More DUI Checkpoints, Increased Patrol During 'Drive Sober Or Get Pulled Over' Campaign

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The Virgin Islands Police Department (V.I.P.D.) is once again ramping up its enforcement efforts as part of a national crackdown on drunk driving, announced Glen Dratte, the V.I.P.D.'s Public Information Officer on Wednesday.

The eleven-day, high-visibility campaign, dubbed "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over", is a partnership with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (N.H.T.S.A.) to curb impaired driving and save lives. From December 29, 2017 to January 08, 2018, law enforcement partners nationwide will show zero tolerance for drunk driving. There will be increased state and national messaging about the dangers of driving drunk, coupled with checkpoints and increased officers on the road aimed at drastically reducing the toll of

drunk driving.

According to N.H.T.S.A., 35,092 people died in traffic crashes in 2015 in the United States, including an estimated 10,265 who were killed in drunk driving crashes involving a driver with an illegal BAC (.08 or greater), according to the release. Among the people killed in these drunk driving crashes, 67% (6,865) were in crashes where at least one driver had a BAC of .15 or higher, the release added.

There was a total of 10 traffic fatalities in the territory in what the release described as "fiscal year" 2017. One of those fatalities was related to impaired driving, Mr. Dratte said. For comparison, there were 6 traffic fatalities in the USVI in fiscal year 2016, according to the release, with two being associated with impaired driving. The data was described as "still troubling, though the number of fatalities related to impaired driving decreased significantly by 66.67%."

In every state, it's illegal to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher. The Office of Highway Safety reminded drivers in the territory that it's not a recommendation; it's the law. During the enforcement period beginning Friday, 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 what the V.I.P.D. described as a reckless, preventable crime. In 2016 there were 57 impaired driving arrests in the territory; 23 more than the previous year. The V.I.P.D., through the Office of Highway Safety said it will continue to promote zero tolerance for such behavior.

Drunk driving is preventable. "All it takes is a little planning ahead. Designate a sober driver or call a cab, but whatever you do, don't drink and drive," cautioned the release.

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