



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONSEQUENCES OF DRUNK DRIVING INESCAPABLE

Checkpoint Strikeforce Campaign Launches Across the D.C. Area

Washington, D.C. – The Adams Morgan lounge, Asylum, was the site of the 2009 *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign kickoff in Washington, D.C. today. As partygoers maximize the last days of summer and college students head back into town, the anti-drunk driving campaign is back with a stern reminder: If you drink and drive, you will get caught, and no one will dodge the severe consequences. Both impaired drivers and motorcyclists will be targeted by law enforcement in this aggressive regional effort. The District of Columbia’s Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) reported more than 1,200 DUI arrests in 2008 and has already made 954 DUI arrests in 2009.

“The consequences of drunk driving can be irreversible. Drunk drivers risk their own lives, and the lives of everyone around them, every time they take the wheel. And we have a message for them, if you choose to drink and drive, you will get caught,” stated Kurt Erickson, President and CEO of the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), which serves as the region’s project director of the *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), alcohol-related traffic fatalities are down nearly 10-percent nationwide (between 2007 and 2008). While over the past two years the District’s alcohol-related traffic fatalities have followed the national trend falling from 16 deaths in 2007 to nine in 2008, fatalities involving motorcyclists quadrupled during this same time. Last year, more than one-third (36-percent) of all motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes in the District had been drinking. The proportion of traffic fatalities in the District involving motorcyclists reached its highest level last year (24-percent) in at least a half-decade (2004 – 2008). These numbers have prompted an additional focus of the 2009 *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign on impaired motorcyclist enforcement.

“MPD plans to strengthen enforcement in areas prone to motorcycle traffic to ensure that all drunk drivers are targeted, regardless of the vehicle they’re driving,” said Commander James

Crane, Special Operations, Metropolitan Police Department. “Nobody is above the law, and there are no exceptions.”

MWR Strategies, a research firm which has conducted *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign surveys since 2002, conducted a public opinion survey of 800 drivers in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia last month and key findings amongst the campaign’s targeted audience of males aged 21-35 included:

- The biggest fear of adults is killing or injuring someone else as a result of driving while intoxicated (70-percent), more than arrest (seven percent) or their own death (11-percent).
- Seventy-seven percent of adults perceive drunk driving as one of the most serious dangers faced on the road.
- Seventy-six percent of adults strongly support the use sobriety checkpoints.
- Eighty-three percent of adults admitted that they would not change their behavior despite knowing sobriety checkpoints were being held in their area.

The region’s 2009 *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign combines proactive public education and stepped up enforcement efforts to effectively erase borders between jurisdictions in fighting drunk driving. A \$300,000 multi-media campaign, encompassing radio and Internet, will run over 5,000 ads on targeted stations from August through December. The creative ads were written and produced utilizing the findings from the campaign’s opinion poll, ensuring the messages resonate and connect with the target audience of 21 to 35-year old males. An additional 200 ads specifically targeting motorcycle enforcement will run via cable TV and radio during the two weeks surrounding Labor Day. The campaign is supported in the Greater Washington area by a grant from the District Department of Transportation as well as from both the Maryland State Highway Administration’s Highway Safety Office and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles’ Highway Safety Office.

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Get more information at <http://www.checkpointstrikeforce.net/educate.html> and visit <http://www.checkpointstrikeforce.net/dcdui.html> to hear the 2009 Checkpoint Strikeforce ads.