



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THERE'S NO DISGUISED A DRUNK DRIVER DC-Area Police Crack Down To Keep Halloween Revelers Safe and Sober

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As the Washington-metropolitan area gears up for a Halloween weekend of fun-filled frights, the *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign is reminding everyone that there are few things scarier than a drunk driver. In partnership with the United States Park Police, the ninth-annual campaign is kicking off a three-day stretch of stepped up enforcement across Greater Washington to ensure that pranksters and partiers keep the festivities where they belong ... off the road.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), more than half (58 percent) of all Halloween traffic fatalities in the United States were caused by drunk drivers in 2008. With Halloween falling on a weekend this year, the risk for alcohol-impaired activity is even greater. In 2009, the Metropolitan Police Department reported that 60 percent of crashes involving alcohol in the District occurred on a weekend day (Friday-Sunday) between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. The majority of drivers in those crashes were between the ages of 21-35 years old, with three times as many male drivers as female drivers.

“The numbers speak for themselves—Halloween is one of the scariest times of the year for drinking and driving,” stated Lieutenant Peter Barrow of the United States Park Police. “Some people seem to think because they’re wearing a cape or a giant ‘S’ on their chest, they’re endowed with superhero powers and are therefore invincible. They’re not. And they’re not above getting caught, getting injured, or most importantly getting killed.”

As part of the *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign, Greater Washington’s law enforcement community patrols for drunk drivers year-round to maintain the safety of all motorists. In 2008, 15,729 individuals were arrested for DUI in the Washington-metropolitan area – an average of 43 per day. So far in 2010, arrests for DUI, at least in Washington, D.C., are already on pace to surpass recent years’ numbers according to the Metropolitan Police Department.

MWR Strategies, a research firm, conducted a public opinion survey of 800 drivers in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia for *Checkpoint Strikeforce*. Among the campaign’s targeted audience of males aged 21 to 35, key findings include:

- The biggest fear of driving while intoxicated is killing or injuring someone else (64 percent)—more than arrest (13 percent) or their own death (16 percent).



- Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) perceive drunk driving as one of the most serious dangers faced on area roadways.
- The same percentage (73 percent) thinks that being caught by police should be drunk drivers' number one fear.
- Nearly one-out-of-four (24 percent) said that they would (or have) changed their behavior knowing that sobriety checkpoints were being held in their area.

The region's 2010 *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign combines proactive public education and stepped up enforcement efforts to effectively erase borders between jurisdictions in fighting drunk driving. Over \$310,000 will be spent on radio, TV and outdoor advertising for the campaign in the Washington-metropolitan area. Between now and the end of December, the campaign will run over 4,500 ads with an emphasis on Labor Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving and the December Holidays. With the theme "A DUI Arrest Turns Men Into Boys," the 2010 ads focus on the traumatic effects of a DUI arrest when a hilarious night brings grown men to tears when arrested for DUI. 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 and to the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP).

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Get more information at <http://www.checkpointstrikeforce.net/educate.html>, and listen to the ads at <http://www.checkpointstrikeforce.net/dcdui.html>.