



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Bob McDonnell

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Governor McDonnell Launches Statewide Crackdown to Reduce Alcohol-Related Incidents

RICHMOND – Governor Bob McDonnell today kicked-off Virginia’s 10th annual Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign – a statewide law enforcement and public awareness effort to detect and deter impaired drivers in the Commonwealth.

As part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s regional campaign, the Governor announced that drunk drivers on Virginia roadways will face the likelihood of arrest because state and local law enforcement officials are increasingly conducting sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols effective now through the end of the calendar year.

Since the inception of Virginia’s Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign in 2002, alcohol-related traffic fatalities in the state have decreased by over 23-percent while alcohol-related traffic injuries in the Commonwealth have decreased by over 32-percent. In 2010, fewer individuals (274) were killed on Virginia highways due to alcohol than in any year since at least 1997 (302). The Governor credited this progress to the combination of effective public education and targeted enforcement.

“Each year we see too many drivers get behind the wheel of a vehicle while they are under the influence of alcohol. However, because of the efforts of the Checkpoint Strikeforce, every year the number of those putting innocent citizens in danger continues to decrease. Through the public education campaigns conducted by Checkpoint Strikeforce, along with more DUI checkpoints on our roads, we are seeing positive results. This Labor Day Weekend, we will have ads running reminding motorists of the consequences of drinking and driving. We also will step up law enforcement throughout the state. It is our goal that through these efforts more Virginia motorists will choose not to drink and drive this holiday weekend and throughout the year. One drunk driver on our roadways, is one drunk driver too many.”

As part of the Checkpoint Strikeforce program, Virginia’s law enforcement community is out in force, looking for drunk drivers. In 2010, 32,760 individuals were arrested for DUI across the state, resulting in 29,063 DUI convictions – an average of one conviction every 18 minutes.

To assist with the 2011 Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign launch, Virginia law enforcement agencies are joining with neighboring states Kentucky, Maryland and North Carolina in a border-to-border effort over the Labor Day holiday.

In 2009, alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities accounted for over a third (38%) of all U.S. motor fatalities throughout the Labor Day holiday according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. A total of 13 traffic fatalities occurred statewide during the four-day holiday last year.

The region-wide Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign combines stepped-up law enforcement efforts and proactive public education to promote a multijurisdictional effort in the fight against drunk driving. A significant multi-media campaign, encompassing radio and television, will run nearly 43,000 ads on a total of 84 broadcast stations, cable systems and radio stations in Virginia between now and December. Additional ads will be broadcast in northern Virginia through a separate media-buy

In addition to the Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign, the Virginia Department of State Police will engage in the annual Operation C.A.R.E. traffic enforcement campaign. The Operation Combined Accident Reduction Effort (C.A.R.E.) is a state-sponsored, national program designed to reduce crashes, fatalities and injuries caused by speeding, impaired driving and failure to use occupant restraints. As a participating agency, Virginia State Police will increase visibility and traffic enforcement efforts throughout the Commonwealth beginning Friday morning, September 2, 2011, at 12:01 a.m. and continuing through midnight Monday, September 5, 2011.

MWR Strategies, a Richmond-based research firm that has conducted Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign surveys since 2002, conducted a public opinion survey of 800 drivers in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia in July 2011 for Checkpoint Strikeforce. Among the campaign’s targeted audience of males aged 21 to 35, key findings include:

- Two-thirds (66%) of these local drivers perceive drunk driving as one of the most serious dangers faced on area roadways.
- Fear of law enforcement and causing death or injury to someone else are equally viewed by these local drivers as the top reasons persons do not drive drunk.
- Nearly half (46%) of these local drivers have either been stopped by law enforcement for a DUI or know someone who has been stopped for a DUI.
- Nearly nine-out-of-ten (88%) of these local drivers would report suspected drunk drivers to law enforcement.

The Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign is supported by a grant from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' Highway Safety Office to the nonprofit and Virginia-based Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP).

Get more information and see the ads at <http://www.checkpointstrikeforce.net>.

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