



PRESS RELEASE

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MARYLAND LAW ENFORCEMENT JOINS TOGETHER IN SUPER BOWL ENFORCEMENT EFFORT TO PREVENT IMPAIRED DRIVING

Operation "40 on 40" set to target areas where DUI offenders are most prevalent.

Columbia, MD – On February 7, Super Bowl 50 will take place, and millions of people will celebrate while watching the game on television. As one of the most watched televised events, the Super Bowl provides a great reason to get together with family and friends. The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) is urging everyone to play it safe this weekend and make a plan to have a safe and sober ride home.

“A third of all traffic fatalities in Maryland are the result of a crash involving an impaired driver,” stated Larry Harmel, Executive Director of the MCPA. “Every one of those crashes is a completely preventable crime.”

More than 170 people lose their lives every year as a result of impaired driving, and another 4,000 people are injured. Across the country, nearly 10,000 people were killed by impaired drivers in 2014, which accounted for 31 percent of all vehicle crash fatalities.

“As law enforcement officers, we see the carnage of crashes involving people under the influence of alcohol or drugs,” stated Annapolis Police Chief Michael Pristoop, also the President of the MCPA. “We are committed to removing those drivers from our roads, but more importantly, we want people to plan to have a sober ride home. With a little personal responsibility, we can prevent impaired driving from ever taking place.”

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Throughout the weekend, the MCPA is coordinating a massive enforcement and education event known as “40 on 40”. A total of 40 troopers, deputies and officers, will work the entire stretch of Route 40 from today and through Sunday night. Spanning more than 60 miles, “40 on 40” will incorporate DUI saturation patrols and at least one DUI checkpoint each night. Funding for the “40 on 40” initiative is provided by the Maryland Department of Transportation through grants from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

“This is not something that law enforcement takes lightly,” stated Harmel. “Our message is simply this – have a safe and sober ride home at the end of the night. There are no excuses for driving impaired and if you do so, you are not only going to be arrested, but you are putting people’s lives at risk.”

Even if an impaired driver does not hurt or kill others, possibly even their own friends or loved ones, the potential penalties of an impaired driving arrest are severe. Those penalties include: tens of thousands of dollars in fines and legal costs; lost wages from time off work; the loss of a license; fees for classes and administrative costs; and the likelihood of having your vehicle fitted with an ignition interlock device.

Designate a sober driver and for those who plan to drive, enjoy the game with food and non-alcoholic drinks.

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NOTE: In 2015, Maryland launched its Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign honoring the state’s “Beautiful” designated sober drivers whether they be individuals, cab drivers, transit operators or drivers from rideshare services. Backed by a marketing campaign that spanned social media, and radio and television spots, the “Beautiful” anti-drunk driving campaign showcases the fact that impaired driving can be stopped with one simple solution – always having a sober ride home. For more information on the campaign, please visit www.towardzerodeathsmd.com.