



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **This Halloween – You BOOze, You Lose Behind the Wheel Police Crack Down To Keep Streets Free of Frightening Drunk Drivers**

MCLEAN, VA – As Greater Washington gears up for a Halloween night of fun-filled frights, the region's *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign is reminding everyone that few things are scarier than drunk drivers. Police across metropolitan Washington region will be out in force this Wednesday, October 31<sup>st</sup> (Halloween) to ensure that pranksters, partiers, ghosts, and goblins keep the festivities where they belong – *off* the road.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 41-percent of all Halloween traffic fatalities nationwide in 2010 were caused by drunk drivers. That same year, the rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes was four times higher at night than during the day.

“A mask or a costume can’t hide the fact that a driver has been drinking,” stated Kurt Erickson, President of the McLean, Virginia-based, nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP). “Everyone loves a good scare at Halloween. But getting caught or, worse, killing or injuring someone is a mistake that will haunt you forever.”

Impaired drivers who fail to plan ahead can turn the roads into a real-life horror show. *Checkpoint Strikeforce* offers a few simple tips to avoid a drunk driving nightmare.

- Plan a safe way home before the festivities begin.
- Before drinking, designate a sober driver.
- If you’re impaired, take a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation to get home safely.
- Call the toll-free *SoberRide* phone number 1-800-200-TAXI between 10:00pm Wednesday, October 31<sup>st</sup> and 4:00am Thursday, November 1<sup>st</sup> for a free (up to a \$30 fare) cab ride.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact local law enforcement immediately by safely dialing 911.

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MWR Strategies, a Richmond, Virginia-based research firm that has conducted *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign surveys since 2002, administered a public opinion survey of 807 drivers in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia in August 2012. Among the campaign's targeted audience, key findings include:

- The biggest fear amongst this group of local male drivers as a result of driving while intoxicated is killing or injuring someone else (66-percent), more than arrest (14-percent) or their own death (15-percent).
- Over two-thirds (69-percent) of these local drivers perceive drunk driving as one of the most serious dangers faced on area roadways.
- Nearly two-thirds (65-percent) of these local drivers have witnessed suspected drunk driving and more than four-out-of-ten (44-percent) have either been stopped by the police for driving while impaired or know someone who has.
- More than one-quarter (27-percent) of these local drivers said that they would (or have) changed their behavior knowing that sobriety checkpoints were being held in their area.

The region's 2012 *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign combines proactive public education and stepped up enforcement efforts to effectively erase borders between jurisdictions in fighting drunk driving. Over \$385,000 will be spent on radio, TV and outdoor advertising for the campaign. Between now and the end of December, the campaign will run over 4,500 ads throughout the Washington/Baltimore region.

The region's Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign is supported by grants from the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, Maryland Highway Safety Office and Virginia Highway Safety Office to the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP).

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