

Cracking down on Cinco de Mayo DUIs



To the community,

Cinco de Mayo has become a traditional time for many to celebrate California's rich cultural history. But it is also a night out with expected dangers when someone chooses to drink and drive. Party hosts, bars and restaurants this year must be sure to plan and promote designating sober drivers in advance -- before the Fiesta begins.

The Avoid the 6 will be deploying additional Roving DUI patrols into the communities of South Lake Tahoe and Placerville in an effort to lower deaths and injuries with so many local establishments offering discounted drink offers in conjunctions with Cinco de Mayo promotional activities.

DUI related crashes have dropped in California thanks to increased sobriety checkpoints and special DUI enforcement campaigns. However, the No. 1 killer on our highways remains impaired driving, with 1,029 dead in 2008 and another 28,457 injured in alcohol involved collisions.

"Communities everywhere will see special events and night spots celebrating Cinco de Mayo this year," said interim SLTPD Chief Martin Hewlett. "Do your part this year and make your celebration memorable by designating non-drinking drivers before the first margarita is ever mixed."

El Dorado County Avoid the 6 DUI Taskforce will be deploying overtime patrols onto city streets while CHP will be

saturating the freeways and into unincorporated communities looking for the signs of a drunken driver:

- Weaving out of the lane
- Wide turns
- Failing to go on a green light
- Driving below the speed limit
- Aggressive, reckless driving
- Drivers who appear drunk behind the wheel

Officers will be stopping errant drivers and checking for the signs of intoxication, conducting field sobriety tests, arresting those who are intoxicated and impounding vehicles of those with suspended or no license.

“Drunken driving is simply not worth the risk. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for impaired driving can be significant,” said Christopher J. Murphy, director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. “Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver’s license, higher insurance rates, attorney fees, time away from work, and dozens of other expenses. So don’t take the chance. Remember, if you are over the limit, you are under arrest.”

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Shannon Laney, SLTPD sergeant