

Cinco de Mayo: Fiesta Time or Jail Time



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05/04/2015

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Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving

Ventura, CA — In the United States, Cinco de Mayo – like St. Patrick’s Day – is for many people just an occasion for having a good time with alcohol. Do you plan to join the fiesta on May 5th? The Ventura Police Department has planned a DUI Checkpoint to deploy officers looking to identify and stop suspected drunk drivers. Additionally, every traffic and patrol officer assigned to duty will be on heightened alert to prevent a senseless tragedy due to alcohol or drugs.

The unfortunate truth is this: many people might be making party plans for Cinco de Mayo, but they aren’t planning ahead for getting home. Only 64 percent of the drivers in fatal crashes on Cinco de Mayo weekend in 2013 had no alcohol in their systems. What about the other 36 percent? They were driving after drinking. Too many people are lying to themselves about the dangers of drinking and driving. Some fiesta-goers think that they can play it by ear, and wait until after they drink to decide whether they’re “okay to drive.” By then, it’s too late.

Recent statistics reveal that 30 percent of drivers in fatal crashes had one or more drugs in their systems. A study of active drivers showed more tested positive for drugs that may impair driving (14 percent) than did for alcohol (7.3 percent). Of the drugs, marijuana was most prevalent, at 7.4 percent, slightly more than alcohol. Mixing medication or drugs – legal or illegal – is a dangerous cocktail. Specially trained drug recognition experts will be checking for drug impairment whenever suspected.

If you don’t designate a sober driver ahead of time or have a solid plan for how you’ll get home safely, you are setting yourself up for disaster. Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving, and when you drive drunk, you run the risk of killing yourself or someone else. Even if you don’t harm anyone, the average DUI costs about \$10,000. Wouldn’t you rather pay for a taxi?

“Our goal is to keep our roadway safe,” said Chief Ken Corney, Ventura Police Department. “Around the county, we want to debunk the myth that you can drink until you feel it and then get behind the wheel. You can’t. Remember that Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving.” Cinco de Mayo can be a fun and festive time for those who choose to celebrate responsibly including a plan for a sober ride. If you make your plans when you’re sober, you won’t risk making a bad decision when you’re under the influence of alcohol.

As you make your Cinco de Mayo plans, the California Office of Traffic Safety is offering a free mobile app – DDVIP – aimed at thanking the sober designated driver with perks and free offers at area bars and restaurants. And for those without a DD - make a sober ride home your priority; the new SaferRide app from NHTSA makes it easier than ever.

A final statistic to remember: drunk-driving deaths are 100 percent preventable.

Funding for this is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration who reminds every motorist to Report Drunk Drivers – Call 911! Remember, Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving. Don’t do it.