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## **Roanoke County Police Department**

*Keeping Our Roads Safe This St. Patrick's Day*

(Roanoke County, VA) - St. Patrick's Day has long celebrated the roots of 34.2 million Americans with Irish ancestry. But did you know that in 2014, there were 18 people killed in drunk driving crashes on St. Paddy's Day? Tragically, March 17th has become one of the nation's deadliest holidays. If your plans for celebrating this year involve alcohol, the Roanoke County Police Department has some advise for you: Don't drink and drive. Law enforcement throughout the Roanoke Valley will be utilizing saturation patrols and checkpoints to crack down on drunk drivers and keep the streets safe for everyone.

Also, keep an eye out for pedestrians who have had too much to drink; walking while intoxicated can also be deadly. The lack of attention and coordination of a drunk pedestrian puts them at risk of getting hit by a vehicle; a fact seen too often in the Roanoke Valley.

The Roanoke County Police Department will be utilizing the 'No Refusal' program from March 11th through March 19th in an effort to crack down on drinking and driving during the St. Patrick's Day celebration. The 'No Refusal' program simply means that if a driver refuses to submit to a breath test after being arrested for driving under the influence then the officer will apply for a search warrant with the Magistrate. If the Magistrate is satisfied with the probable cause for the arrest, a search warrant will be issued and medical staff at the Sherrif's Office will draw a blood sample which will be submitted to the Department of Forensic Science for a toxicology test.

The 'No Refusal' program gives the Commonwealth's Attorney Office the most critical evidence needed to prosecute a DUI offense when a driver refuses to submit to a breath test- a chemical analysis of the alcohol and/or drugs present in the driver. An analysis of DUI arrests in Roanoke County revealed that only about 20% of drivers arrested have refused to submit to a breath test.

The 'No Refusal' program not only gives prosecutors critical evidence needed to successfully prosecute but also sends a clear message that impaired driving is not acceptable on the roads in Roanoke County. The Roanoke County Police Department will utilize all legal means to insure that impaired drivers are held accountable for such a potentially deadly offense during the St. Paddy's Day celebration. No matter how you plan to get home, remember: Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.

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