



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

May 1, 2014

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## **Play it Safe this Cinco de Mayo**

*Designate a Sober Driver Before the Festivities Begin*

SACRAMENTO, CA – Cinco de Mayo is a celebration commemorating the Mexican army's 1862 victory over France at the battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War. Today, many Californians spend the day with friends and family celebrating Mexican culture and heritage by attending parties, barbecues and festivals.

“Cinco de Mayo is known to be one of the most festive days of the year,” said Office of Traffic Safety Director Rhonda Craft. “If you plan on drinking this Cinco de Mayo, also plan not to drive, and make sure to designate a sober driver. A day of food, family, and fun can take a tragic turn when alcohol is involved.”

From 2008 to 2012, drunk driving collisions killed 233 people on Cinco de Mayo. In 2012, almost half (45 percent) of all traffic collision fatalities on Cinco de Mayo involved drunk driving.

This year, the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), the California Highway Patrol (CHP), and local law enforcement are working together to remind partygoers that drunk driving should never be part of your Cinco de Mayo plans.

“Alcohol involved collisions do not have to happen, yet they occur on a regular basis,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “Planning is the key to preventing additional tragedies from occurring. Designate a non-drinking driver in advance. For those who fail to plan to have a designated driver, be warned, officers are working around the clock to remove impaired drivers from the road.”

Eighty-nine people were killed on the nation’s roadways on Cinco de Mayo 2012. That was more than double the number of the year before. Cinco de Mayo 2012 saw 71 percent of the drunk drivers involved in fatal crashes had blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of .15 or higher – almost twice the legal limit. Those deaths were 100 percent preventable.

Over 800 lives were lost in California to impaired driving in 2012, and more than 23,000 people were injured. Even without the tragedy of a death or injury, receiving a DUI conviction can cost a driver their license, plus \$10,000 in fines, fees, insurance and other costs.

(MORE)

The following tips will help you have a safe and memorable Cinco de Mayo celebration:

- 1) Plan your ride ahead of time:
  - Designate a sober driver before the fiesta begins; treat them to free non-alcoholic drinks and other perks by visiting a Designated Driver VIP bar or restaurant near you. Just go to [www.ddvipca.com](http://www.ddvipca.com) and type in your zip code for a list of locations with offers for designated sober drivers.
  - Call a friend or taxi, or use public transportation or a local sober ride program to get home.
- 2) Report Drunk Drivers! Call 9-1-1. When calling, be prepared to offer a description of the vehicle, location and direction of travel. You could save a life.
- 3) If you know people who are about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

Remember, drunk driving is never the answer, and there's always another option. If you are going to drink at all on Cinco de Mayo, designate a sober driver, because *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*.

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