

Press Release



Public Health
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Greene County Public Health

A Safe Communities Grantee of the Ohio Department of Public Safety
Ohio State Highway Patrol-Traffic Safety Division
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-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-
Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Make a Plan for a Sober Ride Before St. Patrick's Day Festivities Begin

XENIA, OH — St. Patrick's Day 2026 celebrations will take place across the country on and around Tuesday, March 17. Greene County Public Health and the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition, along with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) urges drivers to remember that drinking and driving is deadly and never an option. Join these agencies in sharing this message: **Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving.**

Every year, dozens of people are killed when they choose to drive drunk during the St. Patrick's Day holiday. According to NHTSA, 38% (284) of the traffic fatalities that occurred during the St. Patrick's Day holidays between 2019-2023 involved drunk drivers. In 2023 alone, there were 63 fatalities in drunk-driving crashes during the St. Patrick's Day holiday, of which 44 involved drivers with a blood alcohol concentration of .15 or higher.

"Embracing St. Patrick's Day and its traditions is one thing; engaging in the deadly behavior that is drinking and driving is another. Feeling buzzed and getting behind the wheel puts lives at risk," reminds Kaci Warren, Health Educator at Greene County Public Health, and Safe Communities Coalition Coordinator. "Our community has seen firsthand the devastation and loss caused by alcohol-impaired driving, along with the lasting pain it inflicts on families, friends, and entire communities. We're partnering with NHTSA to share the reminder that Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving. Drinking and driving is not an option, but making sure someone sober will be behind the wheel is," she said.

Local authorities are urging everyone to celebrate the holiday safely by making a plan before the festivities begin. The most important step is arranging for a sober ride in advance — whether that means designating a sober driver, using a taxi service, or booking a rideshare. Because alcohol clouds a person's judgment, designated drivers should be prepared to help others who failed to plan ahead find a safe and sober way home. Community members are also encouraged to report suspected impaired drivers to local law enforcement.

For more information on impaired driving, visit www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving.

For more information about the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition, contact Kaci Warren at kwarren@greenecophoh.gov or 937-374-5673.

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