

# MCHD HEALTH BLOG

*The greatest wealth of a community is the health of the people.*



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
MORGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.



## BUZZED DRIVING IS DRUNK DRIVING

Although Irish in its roots, St. Patrick's Day is most widely celebrated in the United States. To help keep our community's roads safe, the Morgan County Health Department (MCHD) is teaming up with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to spread the message about the dangers of drunk driving. If your plans for the holiday include alcohol, make sure you plan for a sober driver. Help us spread the message that Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving.

This year, St. Patrick's Day falls on a Friday, and that means more parties may occur throughout the weekend. If you've been drinking, make the smart choice to plan for a sober driver to get you and your friends home safely. Before you put your keys in the ignition, remind yourself: Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving.

According to NHTSA, 11,654 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes in 2020. On average, more than 10,000 people were killed each year from 2016 to 2020 — one person was killed in a drunk-driving crash every 45 minutes in 2020. This is why MCHD is working with NHTSA to remind drivers that drunk driving is not only illegal, it is a matter of life and death.

St. Patrick's Day is one of the deadliest times on our nation's roads. During the 2016-2020 St. Patrick's Day holiday period (6 p.m. March 16 to 5:59 a.m. March 18), 287 lives were lost in drunk-driving crashes. In 2020 alone, 37 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes over the St. Patrick's Day holiday period (6 p.m. March 16 to 5:59 a.m. March 18).

If you're the designated driver, make sure you keep that promise of safety to yourself and your passengers. It can be a long night, but people are counting on you, not to mention the other drivers, passengers, and pedestrians on the streets. Take the role of designated driver seriously — people are relying on you.

Before ever heading out, it's vital to plan ahead. Be honest with yourself: You know whether you'll be drinking or not. Follow these ideas to ensure you and your fellow partygoers stay safe.

- Plan ahead: If you wait until you've been drinking to make a smart decision, you might not. Before you have one drink, designate a sober driver who won't be drinking.
- If it's your turn to be the designated driver, take your job seriously and don't drink.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact local law enforcement.
- Do you have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take the keys away and let a sober driver get your friend home safely.

For more information about the Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving campaign, visit [www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving](http://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving).