

Edwardsville Police plan enforcement period associated with St. Patrick's Day holiday

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
March 10 2015 11:30 AM



Over the years, there have been improvements in regards to drinking and driving in the area, but with arrests still occurring, more needs to be done, Edwardsville Police Lt. Michael Fillback said.

The Edwardsville Police Department will be conducting a series of traffic enforcement periods in an effort to curtail alcohol violations by the motoring public from Thursday, March 13 to Sunday, March 22. The enforcement does encompass St. Patrick's Day, March 17, a time associated with parties and celebrations. The special enforcement periods are supported by a grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The enforcement campaign is being done to reduce crash injuries and fatalities. The other purpose of the campaign is to emphasize the importance of obeying traffic laws,

the costs associated with traffic citation fines, and DUI costs to the public. Officers will be looking for impaired drivers as well as violators of speed laws and occupant protection violations.

Fillback said his department has a zero tolerance policy for alcohol-related violations, as well as seat belt/child safety restraint violations. Seatbelt enforcement zones will be operated at various locations during the enforcement period, he added.

“People who are going to be drinking should make plans ahead of time for transportation to and from where they are going,” he said. “Part of the (IDOT) grant is to identify periods where we are more likely have people drinking and driving and this is one of those periods. Hopefully this will discourage someone from doing it and possibly save a life.”

Because Edwardsville is a college town with Southern Illinois University present, Fillback said there could be more of a possibility of drinking and driving with students.

“Having worked the street for years when I first started, it seems like we had a lot of college kids who drove after drinking,” he said. “It seems like there is more of a shift now of the younger group walking to the bars. I think the message is out a bit.”

While some are making better choices, Fillback said others do still drink and drive. He said drinking and driving can cause a life-altering experience by an arrest or an accident where someone is killed and have consequences for the rest of a person’s life.

“I would much rather see them walking to nearby homes than driving,” he said. “It doesn’t take driving very far for an accident to occur.”

When someone is driving impaired, if they are checking their phone or talking to someone else in the vehicle it can be serious, the lieutenant said.

“We still make arrests, so obviously, not everyone is getting it,” Fillback said. “We never calculate when we stop someone from drinking and driving, but hopefully the word will resonate and we will keep people safe,” he said.