

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

3927 Lennane Drive, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95834
(916) 419-2510



CONTACT: John Carr
(916) 419-2525

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ABC Awarded \$625,000 Grant to Help Reduce Drunken Driving

Department will Participate in DUI Checkpoints and Try to Identify if Drivers were Over-served

(Sacramento) - The California Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) has been awarded a \$625,000 grant over the next 2 years to fight drunken driving. A special AVOID grant unit has been setup at ABC and will serve as the Department's statewide liaison for various DUI enforcement operations held in cities and counties throughout California.

The grant will focus on reducing alcohol-related deaths and injuries and raise general public awareness regarding the problems associated with drinking and driving. The grant money will help pay for overtime, training, and equipment so ABC officers can help with sobriety checkpoints, DUI saturation patrols and DUI warrant sweeps.

The AVOID DUI Taskforce program is so-named because their message warns drivers that they can 'avoid' a DUI arrest by driving sober. AVOID taskforces are set up throughout the state so that law enforcement agencies can pool resources, without over-taxing any one agency and being more effective in their enforcement and education missions.

Each of ABC's 24 district offices and six specialized units will participate in the AVOID grants in their areas. AVOID grant activities will include DUI Enforcement Operations during holiday periods such as Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day weekend, winter holidays and designated special events with identified DUI problems. Additionally, any information received during the AVOID check points will serve as a tool to help identify if a drunken driver was over-served at an ABC licensed premises. If it is determined that a drunken driver was served too much alcohol at an establishment, ABC will conduct undercover operations to detect intoxicated patrons and take the appropriate action in order to help make California's roads, streets and highways safer.

The AVOID campaign deploys officers onto the streets to reduce the death and destruction caused by drinking drivers. "Drunk driving is a top priority for law enforcement and we will be there shoulder to shoulder to help our colleagues around the State," said ABC Director Steve Hardy.

"California has worked very hard over the past five years to reverse the trend of increasing alcohol-related traffic fatalities," said OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy. "Through an aggressive combination of sobriety checkpoints, saturation patrols and greater vigilance on the part of the public by calling 911 when they see a drunk driver, we're getting these dangerous drivers off the road and saving lives."

Funding for the grant comes from the Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Agency Secretary Dale E. Bonner, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.