



## South Carolina Department of Public Safety

S.C. Highway Patrol

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### SCHP DUI Team Kickoff -- July 1 Colonel's Columbia Remarks

- Good morning.
- We called you here today for a brief but very important announcement.
- Standing behind me are 31 of the best DUI enforcement troopers in our state.
- This group of troopers forms our new, statewide DUI Team.
- Columbia is the only location today in which all members of our team will be together. At 2:30 p.m., they will meet with media in the Troops in which they will be based.
- These men begin work this weekend in Lexington, Horry, Greenville ... all across our state ... with one mission only: to protect you – our citizens -- from intoxicated drivers.
- Sadly, South Carolina hovers near the top of the charts each year for highway fatalities caused by drinking and driving.
- We are currently second in the nation for DUI-related fatalities.
- While DUI accounts for about 32 percent of total highway fatalities. In South Carolina, the crime accounts for about half of the fatalities.

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- Since I became colonel, one of my primary missions has been to find ways to lower those numbers.
- I take every highway fatality personally. I know the lives of those family members left behind will be forever altered.
- We are joined here today, in fact, by members of our own Families of Highway Fatalities' group as well as Mothers Against Drunk Driving.
- These families understand the toll of DUI better than anyone. I thank you all so much for being here today and for the assistance and support you give us in educating the public about safety issues.
- Our goal – through proactive enforcement and this new team -- is to deter people from getting behind the wheel when they are impaired.
- It has been my experience -- in over 20 years as a trooper -- that when we isolate a problem and focus resources toward that single issue, we achieve results.
- To reduce DUI deaths and crashes, we have to take a serious, committed step...not for a week or a month...for as long as it takes.
- At this point, I cannot say *how* long that will be.

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- What I can say is that the men standing behind me today represent the best of the best in DUI enforcement.
- They have a track record of good instinct that has led to the successful arrest and prosecution of drunk drivers.
- These are the troopers we must have on this team. They have a passion for this work and they have the experience of witnessing firsthand the destructive nature of this crime.
- It is not an accident that we are introducing this team right before July 4 weekend.
- July 4 is a holiday known for picnics, family reunions and a day at the lake.
- Those of us in law enforcement know it as one of the most likely times people will get behind the wheel after a few drinks.
- This weekend, these men behind me will fan out across the state, working in and around those DUI hot spots.
- They will work together...alone...with other troopers...and with other law enforcement....
- They will drive different types of vehicles – marked, semi-marked, and unmarked.

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- I want to be clear on how this team will work. While they will be *based* out of a certain geographic area, they will by no means be *limited* to that area.
- There will be times when more resources are needed in Columbia than in Greenville. There will be times when Charleston has seen a spike in DUI collisions and may need help from Orangeburg.
- This team is not confined or limited by boundaries.
- A new, tougher DUI law took effect in South Carolina just this year. We now have a new tool to enforce that law.
- You may have seen billboards on the way over here showing real victims of this crime.
- You will continue to see and hear about DUI from many angles.
- Know this. The Highway Patrol is united with the SC Department of Public Safety and local law enforcement to fight this battle on every front.
- Thank you so much for coming out...
- And now I'd like Capt. Hughes with Troop One to speak a moment about some of the enforcement efforts you can expect in the Midlands this weekend.

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