

## CHP hopes to avoid Halloween nightmares on area roads

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LAKE COUNTY &ndash; The California Highway Patrol (CHP) hopes to scare motorists away from the idea of drunk driving this Halloween.

Last year, the weekend prior to Halloween, CHP officers arrested 1,258 people throughout the state for driving under the influence (DUI).

&ldquo;If you&rsquo;re caught driving under the influence, officers will be treating you to time in the local jail,&rdquo; said CHP Lt. Dane Hayward of the Clear Lake Area office.

In addition to possible jail time, DUI violators face loss of their driver&rsquo;s license, alcohol-treatment classes and other expenses that can exceed \$10,000.

&ldquo;One way to help keep your good time this Halloween from becoming a drunk driving nightmare is to designate a sober driver before the drinking begins,&rdquo; said Hayward.

However, the problem of drunk driving is not just seasonal in California.

DUI is the leading cause of fatal traffic collisions in California. In 2006, 1,597 people died in alcohol-related traffic crashes; they represent 38 percent of the overall total. Another sobering statistic, 14 percent of victims killed in alcohol-involved collisions were under age 21.

The CHP encourages motorists to call 9-1-1 to report suspected drunk drivers. Be ready to provide the vehicle&rsquo;s license plate number, make and model, and location.

In addition to keeping an eye on the road, pedestrian safety is also of paramount concern for the CHP. Last Halloween there were 57 collisions in California involving pedestrians, two were fatal.

&ldquo;Helping to ensure the safety of trick-or-treaters will take a combined effort from both motorists and parents,&rdquo; said Hayward. &ldquo;By taking a few extra precautions, everyone can have a safe and fun Halloween.&rdquo;

Motorists should watch for children darting out from between parked cars and walking on roadways. Also, when driving, be sure to enter and exit driveways carefully. Parents make sure your child can be seen, especially when it gets dark. Remind the kids to look both ways before crossing the street and to use the crosswalks at intersections.

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