



Zero fatalities. Zero excuses.

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As Prom and Graduation Season Approaches, Extra Patrols Watching for Underage Drinking

BISMARCK, N.D. - From April 1 to May 20, law enforcement agencies across North Dakota will have extra patrols enforcing the law against underage drinking, as well as conducting compliance checks and shoulder taps, as part of the *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* campaign. In the midst of proms, graduations, and other activities for teens and young adults in North Dakota during this time of year, deterring teens from alcohol and/or drugs is a critical message for law enforcement to communicate.

"Teens in North Dakota have made good decisions to get them to this point in life. We hope those good decisions continue this spring, as they choose not to drink and drive. Don't waste years of good decisions by making one bad one," said Lieutenant Jeff Solemsaas, Bismarck Police Department.

This enforcement effort is to educate and deter teens from drinking in order to keep them safe. If law enforcement does find anyone underage consuming or in possession of alcohol, those individuals could end up in court and ordered to pay fines. There are zero excuses for driving under the influence, but particularly when a person is underage.

A number of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) groups exist in North Dakota, to educate young people about core issues impacting their lives, including traffic safety decisions. The Thompson Public School SADD chapter in northeast North Dakota is one example of a group using student and community-involved activities to show the consequences and dangers of driving impaired. The chapter recently hosted a game night in their school gymnasium where students used vision-impaired goggles to simulate the effects of alcohol. The group also plans a mock crash event in the spring with local community agencies illustrating the ramifications of driving after drinking alcohol. Over the past five years in North Dakota, more than 300 people have died in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes.

Patty Krebs, Thompson Public School's SADD Advisor said, "If we can get students to stop and think about the choices they are faced with, hopefully when placed in that situation they will make the right decision because they have seen firsthand through our SADD events the effects that alcohol can have."

The NDDOT administers federal grant funding for underage drinking enforcement as part of an overall effort to prevent deaths and injuries on North Dakota roads. Learn more about the efforts to prevent teen driver crashes at VisionZero.ND.gov or join the conversation on the Vision Zero ND [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) page.

Families are invited to create memorials for young drivers and passengers who have died in crashes by visiting the North Dakota Crash Memorial Wall at VisionZero.ND.gov. Each memorial is built on the hope of preventing another death.

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