

# Avoid the 14 Holiday DUI Enforcement



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## AVOID THE 14 SETS THREE-DAY D.U.I. CRACKDOWN OVER INDEPENDENCE DAY WEEKEND IN VENTURA COUNTY

### Moorpark CHP Captain Haunted by Fatal Crash

As Capt. Cliff Williams of the California Highway Patrol's Moorpark squad prepares to send a majority of his officers out to freeway patrol as part of Avoid the 14's DUI crackdown over the Independence Day weekend, he sadly recalls a 23-year-old crash south of Ojai.

The enforcement effort begins at the first minute of Friday, July 3, and ends at midnight on Monday, July 5. The California Office of Traffic Safety funds it through the National Highway Safety Administration. The Ventura CHP will also send out most of its officers, and Oxnard and Camarillo departments will assign extra DUI patrols over the three-day Avoid the 14 crackdown. All departments in the county will have their eyes peeled for impaired drivers.

The 1985 fatal head-on crash Williams remembers to is just the kind that officers are working to prevent. Whenever he drives by the section of State Route 33, right where the freeway ends and the rural road begins, he feels transported back in time to that fateful evening of Jan. 4, 1986. He sees the left hand of Mary Rader, a well-loved Ojai elementary school teacher, sticking out the window of a car hit so hard that the front end is jammed into the passenger compartment. She will soon die at a local hospital. "I could hear her whimpering. I told her that the Highway Patrol was on the scene and the ambulance was on the way," Williams recalled. "I was grateful that a woman had stopped and was holding her hand. It was all anyone could do." The extremely intoxicated driver, Joe Edward Stevens, a multiple offender, was going the wrong way, and had tried to run away after he hit the car, but was caught and detained by another CHP officer who was on routine patrol and had happened upon the crash. "It was the first charge of second-degree murder made against an intoxicated driver in Ventura County," Williams said. "Stevens knew from prior arrests about the dangers of DUI, yet he elected to drive impaired again." "I was in my third year as a CHP officer, but that was 23 years ago. When I drive by there today, the immediate memory and images still reappear in my head. I vividly recall the frustration and anger that a drunk driver had needlessly robbed an innocent woman of her life.

”“Don’t let this Fourth of July blow up in your face,” said Christopher Murphy, OTS director.  
“Remember, if you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don’t hesitate to dial 911.”

Avoid the 14’s officers will be on the road again for an 18-day summer crackdown from Aug. 21 to Sept. 7.

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