



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Mittelstadt Chief Deputy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Crash Reduction Strategy and Posting Photos of OWI Offenders

Over the last couple of years, we have worked to reduce the amount of crashes that have occurred in Dodge County. We have had some success in areas, but other areas continue to be problematic. Working to prevent crashes is a multi-faceted approach and we must constantly work on analyzing our data and our approach in hopes of making an impact. As a reminder, in 2018 Dodge County had the lowest fatal crash total on record in Dodge County. Unfortunately, we have seen an increase again this year as we are already at nine fatalities in 2019. It is crucial that the community and law enforcement continue to work together in an effort to reduce our serious crashes.

As part of our crash reduction efforts, we have focused on a variety of issues including speed, stop sign, OWI, seatbelt and other enforcement initiatives. We have also implemented signage for speed enforcement zones, social media posts and media releases and other methods to ask for the public's compliance. Soon we will be launching another initiative to build on our efforts.

As we all know, impaired driving is a serious problem in Wisconsin. Currently our laws are written that a 1st offense is not a crime, but rather an ordinance violation. Second and third offenses are misdemeanor crimes and fourth offense and greater are felony crimes. There are also enhancers to these offenses if a child under 16 is in the vehicle or if someone is injured or killed in a crash caused by a driver who is impaired.

Since OWI violations continue to be a problem and are a daily danger to the citizens we serve, the Dodge County Sheriff's Office would like to put all potential offenders on notice that we will not tolerate this continued activity. Our deputies will not give breaks for OWI and those who choose to violate this law will be held accountable. Furthermore, for those who choose to violate this law, we are going to post on social media all individuals who have been arrested for a violation of this offense. It is always our hope that we can gain voluntary compliance with the law, but if this choice is made, it will become a public choice.

This disclosure of our OWI arrests is a legal one as it is a public record. For years, we have already released the names of all arrested to the local media via our daily briefings. It is important to remember that all persons, regardless of an arrest, are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Attached is a sample of what our releases may look like. This policy will be implemented on a date to be determined, but no later than August 31, 2019. This advance notice is being given to ensure everyone has ample warning to avoid making a choice that will no doubt be very public. It is our hope that this effort will save lives so that everyone is able to make it home safely to their families at the end of each day.

Questions may be directed to Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt.

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