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If you plan to celebrate the nation's independence with some bubbly this weekend, remember that the Burleson Police Department has a "No Refusal" policy when it comes to investigating suspected drunk drivers.

The Texas Department of Transportation's July 4<sup>th</sup> No Refusal Weekend is July 1-5. Burleson will have a heightened awareness during this time, but stresses that the no refusal policy is enforced year round.

In May 2008, Burleson joined the move to obtain a warrant to draw a suspected drunk driver's blood if that driver refuses to submit to an intoxilyzer test. The blood is drawn at the hospital by a trained and certified phlebotomist technician. In Texas, the average blood alcohol content result from a blood test during a No Refusal Weekend is .17, more than twice the legal limit. The legal limit is .08.

The Fourth of July has repeatedly ranked as the deadliest holiday of the year for alcohol-related crashes by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, even deadlier than the New Year's holiday. In Texas, in 2010, there were 337 alcohol-related crashes during the July Fourth holiday reporting period. Eighty of those crashes were caused by impaired drivers, ages 21-25, the highest percentage of any age group. Thirty-seven percent of all fatal crashes over the Fourth of July holiday reporting period were alcohol related.

A DWI arrest and conviction in Texas can cost \$17,000 or more with fees for towing the car, impounding the car, bail, attorney fees, court costs, hearing and fees to regain and retain the driver's license, DWI fine, probation costs, fees for extended proof of insurance, plus insurance rate hikes.

- The first driving while intoxicated (DWI) conviction is a Class B misdemeanor with a sentence not to exceed 180 days in county jail.
- The second DWI conviction is a Class A misdemeanor with a sentence not to exceed one year in county jail.
- If a child younger than 15 years old is in the vehicle with the intoxicated driver, the DWI charge is upgraded to a state jail felony. A conviction means the intoxicated driver's sentence could range from 180 days to two years in state jail.
- If a person has two prior DWI convictions at the time of their arrest for DWI, the charge is upgraded to a felony. If a person is convicted three times (or more) of DWI, that conviction is a third degree felony that carries a sentence of two-10 years in prison.