



City of La Porte

Established 1892

Police Department

Recognized as a Best Practices Agency by  
the Texas Association of Police Chiefs



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## **La Porte Police never tire of targeting of intoxicated drivers**



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about one in three traffic deaths in the United States involve a driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or higher. Moreover, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that every day in America, approximately 28 people die as a result of drunk driving crashes. Fortunately, thanks to dedicated efforts of law enforcement, rates of drunk driving and alcohol-related fatal crashes have gone down in recent years. Still, the CDC reminds that drunk drivers have continued to get behind the wheel in excess of 112 million times during the past 5 years.

Statewide, Texas continues to lead the nation in roadway deaths via intoxication, with a ten-year average exceeding 1,300 deaths per year. In addition, the results of a CDC Behavioral Risk Factor survey have revealed that 2.1% of Texas drivers admit having driven in the past year after having too much to drink, while the average for the nation remains lower at 1.9%. NHTSA has also cited Texas as leading all other states, year after year, in alcohol related deaths, reaching 3,382 killed in 2013.

To battle such sobering realities, the officers of La Porte Police Department (LPPD) continue to combat drunk drivers along area roadways. The Department received a grant from the Texas Department of Public Safety to allow additional officers to be deployed during holiday weekends, like New Years and Memorial Day, in order to specifically target impaired drivers. Additionally, LPPD Officer strictly practice a “No Refusal” policy, whereas warrants are obtained to draw the blood of anyone suspected of drunk driving and refusing to submit to a voluntary breath test. Some of the reasons the LPPD is able to follow a strict No Refusal policy is the ready access to the City’s Municipal Judge and the fact that La Porte is one of the only cities in the region where the City’s EMS Department is authorized to draw blood from suspected impaired drivers for evidential purposes. This prevents officers from having to travel to downtown Houston in order to obtain blood draw warrants and then a local hospital emergency room to have blood drawn by a nurse. These unique LPPD protocols save officers hours in processing time.



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The process is as follows: Once a suspect is placed in custody for suspicion of DWI, they are transported to the La Porte Jail where he/she is offered an opportunity to voluntarily provide a specimen of breath, blood, or urine. Should the suspect refuse to provide a specimen as requested, the officer will apply for a warrant to draw the suspect's blood, usually via fax machine. Once the warrant is obtained, the officer will contact the La Porte EMS supervisor on duty who will come to the La Porte Jail and draw the suspect's blood on site. That specimen will then be sent to the DPS Crime Lab for analysis and the suspect is booked into the Harris County Jail.

Last year, LPPD filed 80 cases for Driving Under the Influence, this was a drop over the 120 cases filed the previous year. Immediate blood sample collection allows for the suspect's blood alcohol level to be more accurately determined. In the state of Texas, if a person's blood alcohol content in excess of 0.08, they are considered legally intoxicated. For some people, this would be the equivalent of just two alcoholic beverages in a one hour period.

"No Refusal" operations are intended to solidify an arrest case which rests on a question of a driver's particular blood alcohol concentration. Additionally, by using the latest audio and video technologies, suspects are recorded from the moment an officer spots their vehicle, to the point where they are secured in a jail cell. Such technologies, combined with the diligence of LPPD officers, are just one way your public servants are doing their part to keep everyone safe.

LPPD's next DWI enforcement wave is set for May 18<sup>th</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup>. For more information on La Porte PD's role in local "No Refusal" programs, TXDOT's broader grant processes, or LPPD's individual agency and holiday efforts, contact the department at 281-799-1425.