



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Orange County Sheriff's Department Awarded DUID Testing and Training Grant

SANTA ANA, Calif. (Dec. 17, 2025): The Orange County Sheriff's Department – OC Crime Lab has been awarded a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) for training and enhanced drug-impaired driving testing.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department will use the nearly \$160,000 in funding to facilitate the efficient testing of all blood samples collected in DUI investigations for the presence of drugs, regardless of the blood alcohol concentration (BAC).

"We continue to see the impacts of legalization of marijuana and the increase of opioid abuse in our community, including on our roadways," said Don Barnes, Orange County Sheriff-Coroner. "Enhanced testing and training provided by this grant helps us hold accountable those who endanger our community by choosing to drive impaired."

The prevalence of drug-impaired driving is increasing on our roadways. Based on case derived data collected by the Orange County Crime Laboratory, more than half of drivers arrested for DUI in Orange County have at least one impairing drug in their system other than alcohol.

Illicit drugs and certain prescription and over-the-counter medications can cause impairment in an individual. These substances in combination with even a small amount of alcohol can cause a person to become unable to operate a motor vehicle safely.

"Drug-impaired driving is a significant concern in California," OTS Director Stephanie Dougherty said. "Effective drug testing helps with understanding the scope of the problem and assists in the prosecution of people who put lives at risk by driving impaired."

While alcohol remains the worst offender for DUI crashes, The Orange County Sheriff's Department reminds drivers that impaired driving is not just from alcohol. Prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, cannabis products and other drugs, or in combination with alcohol, may also cause impairment and can result in a DUI arrest. Funding for this program is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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