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Convicted Drunk Drivers to Begin Random Chemical Testing



Convicted drunk drivers will begin random urine analysis Monday, August 11th. The drug and alcohol testing is a requirement imposed by Magistrate Court judges for each offender convicted after June 1st this year.

Drunk drivers convicted of DWI for their first, second or third time must call every day between 5 AM and 8 AM to determine if they must report to provide a sample. Each offender is assigned to an animal group, dog, cat, bird, turtle, bear or fish. If their animal group name is called for that day they must report to Millennium Treatment Services on St. Michael's Drive for testing between 7 AM and 9 AM.

The court is informed of any violation, a positive test for alcohol or illicit drugs or not reporting, and further sanctions may be imposed by the judge. Each offender is supervised by the Santa Fe County DWI Program staff to track and report compliance to the court.

"Historically DWI offenders have had treatment for alcohol related issues as part of their sentence. We fully expect to find that there are other substance abuse complications for some offenders. This program will help us identify those problems and allow the courts to assign more treatment options for our clients," said Lupe Sanchez, DWI Program Coordinator.

The Santa Fe County DWI Program is funding the contract for this pilot program with \$14,000 from the program budget funded by the New Mexico Liquor Excise Tax.

For further information contact Peter Olson at 992-9844, 629-9278 (cell) or polson@santafecountynm.gov.

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DWI offenders face new drug-testing rules

By Uriel J. Garcia

The New Mexican | Posted: Friday, August 8, 2014 7:00 pm

Santa Fe County magistrate judges next week will begin requiring convicted drunken drivers to undergo random urine tests.

The Santa Fe County DWI Program said in a news release Friday that the requirement will be imposed on each offender convicted after June 1 of this year.

Convicted DWI offenders will have to call every day between 5 a.m. and 8 a.m. to determine if they must report to provide a urine sample for chemical analysis.

Each offender will be assigned to an animal group — dog, cat, bird, turtle, bear or fish — and if their animal group name is called in that day, they must report to Millennium Treatment Services on St. Michael's Drive for testing between 7 and 9 a.m., the statement said.

If the Magistrate Court is informed of any violation of the offender's sentence — a positive test for alcohol or illicit drugs, or failure to report — further sanctions may be imposed by the judge.

Peter Olson, a spokesman for the county's DWI Program, said it handles about 500 offenders a year.

“Historically, DWI offenders have had treatment for alcohol-related issues as part of their sentence,” DWI Program coordinator Lupe Sanchez said in a statement. “We fully expect to find that there are other substance abuse complications for some offenders. This program will help us identify those problems and allow the courts to assign more treatment options for our clients.”

The pilot program, which is expected to run between four and six months, was funded with a \$14,000 grant from the Santa Fe County DWI Program, which is funded with revenue from the New Mexico Liquor Excise Tax.

If the random testing program yields beneficial results, Olson said, officials will push to renew it.

“What we're trying to do is give people the help they need to solve the problem that got them [in the program] in the first place,” Olson said.

If any other substance is found in the person's urine, he or she may face additional sanctions, but that will be at the discretion of the judge, Olson said.