



CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL NEWS RELEASE

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TOP FIVE CHP STORIES OF THE WEEK

#ICYMI: This week, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) made headlines with several notable incidents, including an arrest in a prominent Bay Area retail theft operation, Oceanside officers halting a dangerous 30 motorcycle freeway takeover, Merced officers seized 350 pounds of processed marijuana along with \$70,000 in cash, three DUI arrests with gun seizures in the Solano area, and CHP celebrating women in the department.



The list below includes the headline (with a link to the full text) and an excerpt from each announcement. Click on the headlines to access accompanying assets that are available for download.

1. [ARREST MADE IN LARGE BAY AREA RETAIL THEFT OPERATION](#)

On March 11, the California Highway Patrol announced the arrest of Claudia Ivet Cruzbarragan, 41, in connection with an organized retail theft ring. The Golden Gate Division Organized Retail Crime Task Force launched an investigation in July 2024, uncovering a fencing operation in Oakland. On February 27, 2025, officers executed a search warrant at a residence and two storage units, recovering stolen merchandise worth over \$779,000. Cruzbarragan, who had an outstanding warrant from a prior search, was taken into custody. On March 3, the Alameda County District Attorney filed formal charges, including organized retail crime, possession of stolen property, and conspiracy.

2. CHP HALTS DANGEROUS MOTORCYCLE TAKEOVER IN OCEANSIDE

On March 8, officers from the CHP Oceanside area office were called into action due to hazardous conduct by a large group of motorcyclists on Interstates 5 and 805. The officers issued 30 citations on a misdemeanor charge, including reckless driving, obstructing traffic, and being an active sideshow spectator. All 30 motorcycles involved in the sideshow were impounded. The incident unfolded around 8 a.m. when the group entered northbound I-805. Their dangerous stunts and careless driving slowed traffic for over 24 miles. By 8:30 a.m., the group exited from I-5 in Solana Beach. CHP officers directed the motorcyclists into a parking lot, where they were cited and released.

3. MERCED OFFICERS SEIZE 350 POUNDS OF PROCESSED MARIJUANA ALONG WITH \$70,000 IN CASH

On March 6, a Central Division CHP K-9 officer conducted an enforcement stop on northbound I-5 in Merced County for a traffic violation. The officer smelled marijuana and noticed signs of possible criminal activity. K-9 "Shei" alerted to narcotics, leading to a search that uncovered 350 pounds of illegal marijuana and \$70,000 in cash. The driver was charged with illegal marijuana sales, transporting marijuana across counties, and money laundering.

4. 3 DUI ARRESTS AND 3 GUN SEIZURES IN SOLANO AREA

In the past week, CHP officers in the Solano Area have been busy arresting three individuals suspected of impaired driving. In those cases, three illegal firearms were also seized!

On the 1st of March, our diligent officers conducted a wellness check after finding a parked car on the shoulder. After an inspection, the driver was detained on suspicion of DUI. During the inventory of the vehicle, a loaded firearm was discovered with no identifiable serial number. The driver faced charges of both impaired driving and weapons offenses.

Similarly, on the 7th of March, another individual was taken into custody on grounds of suspected DUI. A loaded handgun was discovered during the vehicle inventory. The driver, already with a criminal record, was booked on charges of DUI and illegal possession of a firearm, among other weapons violations.

Finally, on the 8th of March, yet another driver was arrested where DUI was suspected. A loaded handgun was also retrieved from the vehicle. The driver, a convicted felon, was charged with DUI and possession of an illegal firearm.

5. [**CHP CELEBRATES WOMEN IN THE DEPARTMENT**](#)

On International Women's Day, March 8th, the CHP proudly recognized and celebrated the incredible women – both in uniform and professional staff – who help uphold the mission of the California Highway Patrol: Safety, Service, and Security. From patrolling our highways to dispatching calls, investigating crashes, managing critical operations, and supporting our communities, these dedicated professionals play a vital role in keeping California safe. For more information about a rewarding and life-changing career with the CHP, visit our [website](#) or sign up for the upcoming [CHP hiring seminar](#) online on Tuesday, March 18.

The mission of the CHP is to provide the highest level of Safety, Service, and Security.

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