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Wrong-Way DUI Driver Involved in Fatal Crash on SR-52 Sentenced to Prison

Maricela Diaz Had a Blood-Alcohol Level of Three Times the Legal Driving Limit

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today that defendant Maricela Diaz, 24, was sentenced to six years in prison for gross vehicular manslaughter in connection with a 2022 crash that killed El Cajon resident Roberto Mendez Sanchez, 49.

Diaz, who was 23 at the time of the crash, had a measurable blood-alcohol content of about 0.24% after the crash, which is three times the legal limit for driving. Although Diaz was sentenced to six years, prosecutors argued for the maximum sentence under the law, which is 10 years in prison.

“It is heartbreaking that yet another precious life is lost to a completely preventable crime,” DA Summer Stephan said. “The power to end these senseless losses of life is in every driver’s hands. If you plan on drinking, have a designated driver, take a cab, or use a rideshare service. Simply do not get behind the wheel while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and know that if you do, you will be held accountable.”

On June 6, Diaz pleaded guilty to gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated and DUI with injury.

Deputy District Attorney Laura Evans prosecuted this case.

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About the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office

The San Diego County DA’s Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.