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Joan Kennedy Gets Court Date

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Joan B. Kennedy, wife of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) has been ordered to appear in Fairfax County District Court on Nov. 6 on drunk driving charges arising from an automobile accident Wednesday on Rte. 123 in Northern Virginia.

According to county law enforcement officials, she will be offered a choice of enrolling in a federally-financed drinking driver rehabilitation program or going to court on the drunk driving charge.

If convicted of that charge, she faces a possible fine of \$1,000 a year in jail, and suspension of her driving licence for between six months and a year.

Under the rehabilitation program, known as the Alcohol Safety Action Project (ASAP), the charge could be reduced to a lesser charge of reckless or improper driving,

for which the first offender's fine is about \$200.

Mrs. Kennedy, 38, need not appear in court if she wishes. She could have her attorney plead her guilty and accept the sentence of the court, according to officials.

Police said Mrs. Kennedy was given a breathalyzer test following the accident, which occurred at the intersection of Virginia Rte. 123 and 193 near the entrance to the Central intelligence Agency. No one was injured.

Police refused to divulge the results, but sources close to the case said her blood alcohol concentration registered between .20 and .25 per cent on a scale of .00 to .40.

A .10 per cent reading constitutes legal intoxication under Virginia law.

Commonwealth Attorney Robert F. Horan said yesterday that if she elects to enroll in the program, Mrs. Kennedy's case would be postponed

until the completion of the program.

Those who elect to enroll in ASAP are sent to the program's office at Fairfax Circle, where they undergo three hours of screening, including an analysis of the driving record and drinking habits.

If accepted for the program, participants are then placed in one of three treatment categories—one group for those who say they are social drinkers and deny any drinking problem, another for those who admit they are problem drinkers, and a third for those who say they have a serious drinking problem, according to ASAP officials. They then attend weekly sessions for as long as a year.

Carrington Williams, a Fairfax attorney who is representing Mrs. Kennedy said, yesterday, "No decision has been made yet on whether she will enroll in that program."

He noted, "I am still investigating the situation."