

DRUNK DRIVING FACTS (1)

Alcohol related motor vehicle crashes kill someone every 31 minutes and non fatally injure someone every two minutes (2).

Each year, alcohol related crashes in the United States cost about \$51 billion (3). In 2005, 16,885 people in the U.S. died in alcohol related motor vehicle crashes (2).

DRUNK DRIVING ACCIDENT PREVENTIONS

Aggressively enforcing:

- Existing 0.08% BAC laws
- Minimum legal drinking age laws
- "Zero tolerance" for drivers younger than 21 years in all states (4).
- Sobriety checkpoints (5).
- Reducing the legal limit for blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.05% (6).

ZERO TOLERANCE LAWS FOR YOUNG DRIVERS

One study found that fatal crash outcomes decreased 24% after implementation of "zero tolerance" laws (7).

In 2004, Males and drivers ages 21 to 24 had highest percentage of drivers in fatal crashes with BAC levels of .08 or higher (8).

16,694 alcohol-related fatalities occurred in 2004 – 39 percent & of the total traffic fatalities for the year. Equal to a Boeing 747 crashing, and leaving no survivors, every nine days all year long – over 39 airplanes in total. In '05 there were 191 more crashes.

Rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes shows alcohol to be involved more than 3 times higher at night than during the day.

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS FOR HOLIDAY DRIVING (9)

IMPORTANT FACT!

The Thanksgiving to New Year's holiday season is one of the years most deadly and dangerous seasons due to alcohol-related car crashes (10).

Americans who drive while impaired on St. Patrick's Day and other holidays make for high risk evenings on the nation's roadways. Practice these safe drinking precautions:

- Designate your sober driver before the party begins and give that person your car keys.
- Don't starve yourself before or during the party. Enjoy the food as well as the drink.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol too fast. Pace yourself – eat, take breaks, alternate with nonalcoholic drinks.

IF IMPAIRED, DON'T GET BEHIND THE WHEEL!

Ask a sober friend for a ride home. Call a cab, friend or family member to come and get you. Call your local sober rides program, use mass transit. Or stay where you are and sleep it off until you are sober.

Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk. Take the keys and never let a friend leave your sight if you think they are about to drive while impaired.

IF YOU ARE HOSTING A HOLIDAY PARTY

- Serve lots of food – particularly high-protein dishes. Include lots of nonalcoholic beverages, desserts and coffee.
- Check that guests have designated their drivers in advance. Help arrange ride sharing with sober drivers.
- Keep the numbers for local cab companies handy, and take the keys away from anyone who is thinking of driving while impaired.

IMPORTANT FACT!

About three in every ten Americans will be involved in an impaired driving crash at some point in their lives (11).

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR SAFE DRIVING (12)

- Volunteer to be a designated driver.
- Use four-lane highways whenever possible.
- Avoid rural roads.
- Avoid travel after midnight, especially on Fridays and Saturdays
- Drive defensively.
- Choose vehicles with airbags.
- Never use illegal drugs. Illicit drugs are involved in a large proportion of traffic fatalities.
- Never drive when fatigued. The dangers posed when fatigued are similar to those when intoxicated.
- Don't use a car phone, put on makeup, comb your hair, or eat while driving.
- Drivers using cellular phones are four times more likely to have an accident than other drivers.
- Steer clear of aggressive drivers. Aggressive drivers may be responsible for more deaths than drunk drivers.

EXTRA TIPS FOR SAFE PARTY HOSTING (12)

- Create a setting conducive to easy, comfortable socializing: soft, gentle music; low levels of noise; comfortable seating. This encourages conversation and social interaction rather than heavy drinking.
- Serve food before drinks. This de-emphasizes the importance of alcohol and also sends the message that intoxication is not desirable.
- Have a responsible bartender. Make sure that person is not a drink pusher who encourages excessive consumption.
- Don't have an "open bar." You have both a moral and a legal responsibility to make sure that none of your guests drink too much.
- Pace the drinks and serve them at regular reasonable intervals. One drink an hour is a good guide.
- Push snacks! Make sure that people are eating.
- Respect anyone's choice not to drink. One third of American adults choose to not drink. Never put anyone on the defense for not drinking.
- Plan your party's end time. Decide when you want the party to end and stop serving drinks well before that time. Then begin serving coffee along with substantial snacks. This provides essential non-drinking time before guests leave.

- 1 <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/drving.htm>
- 2 NHTSA 2006
- 3 Blincoe et al. 2002
- 4 Shults et al. 2002, Quinlan et al. 2005
- 5 Elder et al. 2002
- 6 Howat et al. 1991; National Committee on Injury Prevention and Control 1989
- 7 <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/spotlite/3d.htm>; Elder et al. 2002, Howat et al. 2004, Shults et al. 2001, Shults et al. 2002
- 8 <http://www.alcoholalert.com/drunkdirivingstatistics.html>
- 9 <http://www.nicd.us/drunkdirivingandtheholidays.html>
- 10 http://www.reshealth.org/yourhealth/drunck_driving.cfm
- 11 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
- 12 <http://www.foh4you.com/mem/library/default.asp?TopicId=268&CategoryId=0&ArticleId=18>

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:

Table showing number of 2004 holiday season alcohol-related crashes and fatalities

<http://www.madd.org/stats/10419>

Alcohol related fatalities nationwide from 1982 - 2004 plus Alcohol-related fatalities by state for this period.

<http://www.alcoholalert.com/drunck-driving-statistics.html>