

Driving Under the Influence

Imagine how much more enjoyable your time with friends and family might be without the danger, risk and worry associated with driving under the influence.

If you don't extend care
and concern to your friend,
WHO WILL?

When it comes to driving under the influence, the stakes are high and so is the cost. Tens of billions are spent each year in the United States from crashes alone. And every hour of every day someone dies from an alcohol-related crash.

Over 100 million people admit to alcohol-impaired driving every year, with more than a million arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. One third of all fatal car crashes involve an intoxicated person. Other drugs were attributed to 18% of vehicular deaths.

RISKS OF DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Every state has now adopted a .08% BAC, or blood alcohol concentration, as the

legal limit for operating a motor vehicle for adults 21 and over. You cannot drive with any alcohol in your system if you're under 21. However, some individuals are more likely to drive under the influence than others.

- **Young people** - One in three drivers above the legal .08% limit were between the ages of 21-24.
- **Motorcyclists** - One third of motorcyclists killed in crashes have a BAC above the legal limit.
- **Previous history** - Those who have a prior DWI, or driving while impaired, conviction are seven times more likely to be in a fatal car crash involving alcohol.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Despite the legal .08% BAC level, smaller amounts of alcohol can still majorly impact driving. Consider these:

- **At .02% BAC** - Visual functioning and multitasking decline. Judgment is impaired as a driver may become too relaxed.
- **At .05% BAC** - Eye movement, reaction time, and information processing are all slowed. You may be less coordinated and struggle to steer.
- **At .08% BAC** - Reasoning and perception are highly affected. Vision and reaction time can be significantly poor. You may not be able to control the speed of your vehicle.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ **Make a plan** - Designate a driver who won't drink before you go out. Don't assume someone will volunteer once you arrive at your destination. If you will be traveling alone, arrange for a cab or friend to pick you up.
- ✓ **Be honest** - Have an open agreement among friends to be accountable. If anyone's been drinking, take his or her keys away.
- ✓ **Be a good host** - Offer non-alcoholic beverages at your event. Ensure everyone has a safe ride home or a place to stay until they are able to drive responsibly.
- ✓ **Keep it alcohol-free** - Plan activities with your family and friends that don't involve alcohol.

KEEP IN MIND

Knowing how much alcohol consumption will put you above the legal limit is difficult to assess. Many factors such as weight, gender, body type, and food intake affect your blood alcohol level. The safest driving for you and others is alcohol-free.

What positive steps will you take today to stop driving under the influence?