



Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention

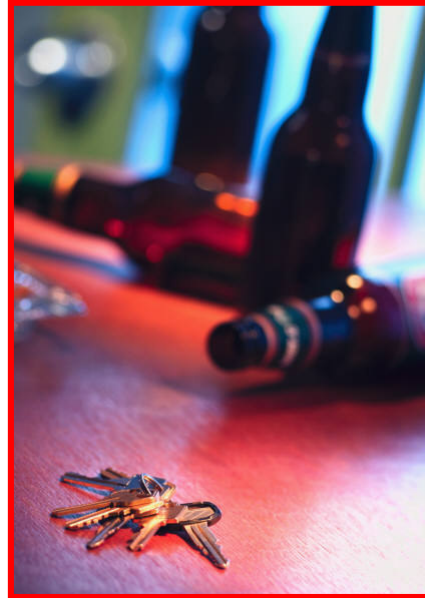


December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

Though thousands of people die or are injured in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes each year in the United States, effective measures to prevent these deaths and injuries do exist.

Quick Facts About Drunk and Drugged Driving

- In 2005, 16,885 people died in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes, accounting for 39% of all traffic-related deaths in the United States (NHTSA 2006).
- An alcohol-related motor vehicle crash kills someone every 31 minutes and nonfatally injures someone every two minutes (NHTSA 2006).
- Drugs other than alcohol (e.g., marijuana and cocaine) are involved in about 18% of motor vehicle driver deaths. These other drugs are generally used in combination with alcohol (Jones et al. 2003).
- Each year, alcohol-related crashes in the United States cost about \$51 billion (Blincoe et al. 2002).



- Most drinking and driving episodes go undetected. In 2005, nearly 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics (Department of Justice 2005). That's less than one percent of the 159 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults each year (Quinlan et al. 2005).

There are actions that work to prevent injuries due to impaired driving. To further decrease alcohol-related fatal crashes, communities need to implement and enforce strategies that are known to be effective, such as:

- **Sobriety checkpoints.** Fatal crashes thought to involve alcohol dropped a median of 22% (with random breath testing) and 23% (with selective breath testing) following implementation of sobriety checkpoints.
- **0.08% BAC laws.** Fatal alcohol-related crashes showed a median decrease of 7% following the implementation of 0.08% BAC laws in 16 states.
- **Minimum legal drinking age (MLDA) laws.** Raising the MLDA, such as from 18 to 21, decreases crash-related outcomes a median of 16% for the targeted age groups.
- **"Zero tolerance" laws for young drivers.** One study found that fatal crash outcomes decreased 24% after implementation of "zero tolerance" laws (Elder et al. 2002, Howat et al. 2004, Shults et al. 2001, Shults et al.

References

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