



December is Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Month

Like alcohol, drugs, and certain medications (such as codeine, antihistamines, sedatives, certain cardiovascular medications, and tranquilizers) impair perception, judgment, motor skills, and memory. These effects can be dangerously magnified when consumed with alcohol, even in cases where a driver's blood alcohol level is below legal limits. Driving while impaired, from alcohol, drugs, medication, or any combination of them, puts us all at risk and must be prevented.

Facts

- In 2008, 11,773 people were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for nearly one-third (32%) of all traffic-related deaths in the United States.
- In 2008, of the 1,347 traffic fatalities among children ages 14 and younger, about one out of every six (16%) involved an alcohol-impaired driver.
- Of the 216 child passengers ages 14 and younger who died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes in 2008, about half (99) were riding in the vehicle with the alcohol-impaired driver.
- In 2008, over 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. That is less than one percent of the 159 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults each year.
- Drugs other than alcohol (e.g., marijuana and cocaine) are involved in about 18% of motor vehicle driver deaths. These other drugs are often used in combination with alcohol.

Protect yourself, your family, and friends

During the holiday season, and year-round, take steps to make sure that you and everyone you celebrate with avoids driving under the influence of alcohol and stay safe:

- **Plan ahead.** Always designate a non-drinking driver before any holiday party or celebration begins.
- **Take the keys.** Do not let a friend drive if they are impaired. Consider calling a cab if there are no non-drinking drivers available.
- **Be a helpful host.** If you are hosting a party this holiday season, remind your guests to plan ahead and designate their sober driver. Always offer alcohol-free beverages, and make sure all of your guests leave with a sober driver.

On December 7, law enforcement agencies launched the "Over the Limit. Under Arrest." national drunk and impaired driving crackdown campaign. Sobriety checkpoints will reinforce the law. Remember:

- **The minimum legal drinking age (MLDA) is 21.**
- **Blood Alcohol Concentration laws:** all 50 states and the District of Columbia have per se laws defining it as a crime to drive with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at or above a proscribed level, 0.08 percent, and 0.02 percent for drivers under 21 years old.