

# National Drunk Driving Prevention Month



Every day, 36 people in the United States die, and approximately 700 more are injured, in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver.

This December, during National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month (3D Month), consider what you and your community can do to make injuries and deaths from impaired driving less of a threat.

## Myths vs. Facts about Drinking and Driving

**Myth:** Coffee can sober up someone who has had too much to drink.

**Fact:** Only time sobers. It takes about one hour to oxidize each drink.

**Myth:** Hard liquor is more intoxicating than beer or wine.

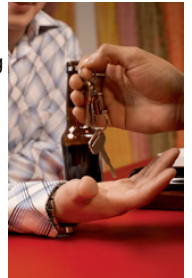
**Fact:** A 12-ounce can of beer, a five-ounce glass of wine, a 12-ounce wine cooler contain the same amount of alcohol and the same intoxication potential as 1 1/2 oz. of liquor.

**Myth:** Someone who has had too much to drink will look intoxicated.

**Fact:** Someone's physical appearance can be misleading. One drink can impair someone's ability to drive. Judgment is the first thing affected when someone has been drinking and important motor skills are next.

## Protect Yourself and 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. Following these tips from NHTSA can help you 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.
- Take a cab or public transportation.
- Make a reservation and spend the night.
- Consume food, sip your drinks, and alternate with non-alcoholic beverages.
- Ask your server about a ride home if you have been drinking to the point of impairment.
- Be a helpful host. If you're 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.
- Never serve alcohol to someone under the legal drinking age, and never ask children to serve alcohol at parties.
- Don't let guests mix their own drinks. Choosing a reliable "bartender" will help you keep track of the size and number of drinks that guests consume.
- If a guest appears to be drinking a bit much, offer to freshen his or her drink with a virgin version.
- Do not push drinks! Drinking at a party is not mandatory for having a good time.
- Have fun – but not too much fun. To be a good host, you should stay within your limits in order to make sure your guests stay within theirs.
- Close the bar 90 minutes before the party ends and serve a great dessert treat with coffee. Remember, only time sobers someone who has been drinking.
- If, despite your efforts, some of your guests have had too much to drink, drive them home, arrange for a ride with another guest who is sober, call a taxi, or invite them to stay over.

## If a guest is drinking too much

The first time is the hardest, but your actions could save your friend's life or that you cannot let them drive home because you care. Offer to let the guest spend the night, call a cab, or ask a sober guest to drive the intoxicated person home.

- Engage him/her in a conversation to slow down the drinking.
- Offer high protein food.
- Offer to make the next drink and use less alcohol.
- Don't be afraid to insist that they sit out the sipping for awhile or switch to beverages of the non-alcoholic variety– sparkling cider makes a great substitute for a glass of champagne.

## Know How Communities Can Help

Proven community and state-level methods for reducing alcohol-impaired driving include:

- **Sobriety checkpoints.** Studies found that fatal crashes thought to involve alcohol dropped by about 22% following implementation of sobriety checkpoints.
- **Minimum legal drinking age (MLDA) laws.** Studies found that raising the MLDA to 21 reduced crashes by about 16% among people ages 18-20 years.
- **0.08% BAC laws.** Fatal alcohol-related crashes declined about 7% after 0.08% BAC laws were passed.

**"Zero tolerance" laws for young drivers.** Three studies found that zero tolerance laws resulted in declines in fatal crashes among drivers ages 18-20 years of between 9% and 24%.

<http://www.silverspringcenter.com/Healthy/drunk.htm>

[http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired\\_driving/3d.html](http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/3d.html)