

Drunk Driving

In 1996, 17,126 people were killed in the United States as a result of alcohol-related traffic crashes -- an average of one every 32 minutes. These deaths constituted approximately 41 percent of the 41,097 total number of traffic fatalities which occurred in 1996. (*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (1997). Fatal Accident Reporting System. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.*)

The following states or territories had traffic fatalities in which 50 percent or more of all traffic fatalities were alcohol-related: Alaska, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Tennessee, and Washington. (*Ibid.*)

In 1997, 20 percent (184) of children under age 5 killed in traffic fatalities were killed in alcohol-related fatalities; 16.7 percent (134) children age 5-9; 23.3 percent (248) children age 10-14; and 34 percent (1,771) adolescents age 15-19 were killed in alcohol-related fatalities. (*Ibid.*)

In addition, in 1997, 55.4 percent (2,890) of persons age 20-24 killed in traffic fatalities were killed in alcohol-related fatalities; 57.8 percent (2,329) of persons age 25-29; 58.4 percent (2,088) of persons age 30-34; and 55.6 percent (1,959) of persons age 35-39 were killed in alcohol-related fatalities. Over age 40, drunk driving-related fatalities steadily decrease from 51.3 percent of all traffic fatalities (1,533) for persons age 40-44 to 11.9 percent (461) for persons 75 years and older. (*Ibid.*)

It is estimated that 1,058,990 people were injured in alcohol-related crashes in 1995. On an average, one person is injured as a result of alcohol impaired driving every 30 seconds. (*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.*

(1996). Fatal Accident Reporting System. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.)

About two in every five Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives. (*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (1995). Fatal Accident Reporting System. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.*)

The highest number of traffic fatalities to occur in 1995 on a "single" day holiday was on Saint Patrick's Day (68.1 percent). (*Ibid.*)

Drunk driving is the nation's most frequently committed violent crime. (*Summary of Statistics: The Impaired Driving Problem. (1996). Irving, TX: Mothers Against Drunk Driving National Office.*)

Direct costs of alcohol-related crashes are estimated at \$45 billion yearly. It is also estimated that an additional \$70.5 billion is lost in quality of life due to alcohol-related crashes. (*Miller T. R. & Blincoe, L. J. (1994). "Incidence and Cost of Alcohol-involved Crashes," pp. 583-59. Accident Analysis & Prevention, Vol 26, Number 5.*)

Every weekday night from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m., one in 13 drivers is drunk (BAC of .08 or more). Between 1 a.m. and 6 a.m., on weekend mornings, one in seven drivers is drunk. (*Ibid., 1996 update*)

Traffic crashes are the greatest single cause of death for every age from six through 28. Almost half of these crashes are alcohol-related. (*Ibid.*)

Note: OVC makes no representation concerning the accuracy of data from non-Department of Justice sources.