



NTSB

SAFETY ALERT

National Transportation Safety Board

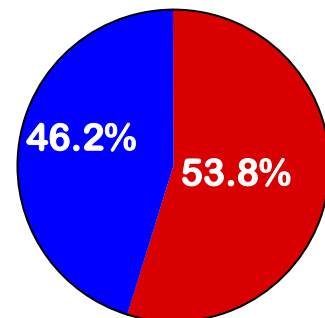
★ Hard Core Drinking Drivers

Get habitual drinking drivers off the nation's highways

The problem:

- One alcohol-related death occurs in our country every 31 minutes. One alcohol-related injury occurs every 2 minutes.
- Alcohol-related deaths in car crashes remain significantly higher than the 1999 all-time low.
- 17,036 people died in the United States from alcohol-related crashes in 2007.
- In 2007, people identified as “hard core drinking drivers” – those with high blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels of 0.15 percent or greater or who are repeat offenders with a drunk driving arrest or conviction in the past 10 years – were involved in more than 53 percent of the alcohol-related fatalities and more than 22 percent of the total highway deaths.
- Between 1983 and 2007, more than 220,000 people died in crashes involving hard core drinking drivers.
- Repeat offenders represent about one-third of all drivers arrested or convicted of driving while intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol.

17,036 Alcohol-Related Fatalities in 2007



Effective actions to curb hard core drinking drivers:

The elements in the National Transportation Safety Board's model for an effective anti-drinking and driving program save lives are:

- Conduct frequent and statewide sobriety checkpoints.
- Implement programs for identifying individuals who drive on a suspended or revoked license.
- Define a repeat offender as anyone arrested of a DWI offense within 10 years of a prior arrest for DWI. One DWI arrest is indicative of a substance abuse problem.
- Impose tougher penalties, assessment and treatment for DWI offenders arrested with a BAC level of 0.15 percent or higher. The estimated relative fatality risk of drivers in single-vehicle crashes with a high BAC is 385 times that of a zero BAC driver.

- Use administrative license revocation, which reduces involvement of adult drivers in fatal crashes by 13 percent to 19 percent.
- Prohibit plea-bargaining. Alternatively, require that the original alcohol-related charge be listed in court and motor vehicle licensing records.
- Prohibit diversion programs. Diverted offenders repeat their offense faster and often receive multiple diversions, despite legislated limits on the use of this measure.
- Establish individualized court-based sanction programs, such as DWI courts, with frequent offender contact, unannounced testing, mandatory assessment, treatment, and long-term follow-up.
- Use vehicle sanctions, such as license plate impoundment, ignition interlock devices, vehicle immobilization, vehicle impoundment, and vehicle forfeiture.
- Implement alternatives to jail confinement such as home detention with electronic monitoring; intensive supervision probation; or jail-treatment facilities, especially for multiple DWI offenders.
- Require DWI offenders to maintain a zero BAC level. Such measures have resulted in a 25 percent reduction in the proportion of repeat offenders involved in fatal crashes.

Need more information?

- NTSB Most Wanted List: www.nts.gov/Recs/mostwanted/hard_core_drinking.htm
- NTSB Safety Report: Actions to Reduce Fatalities, Injuries, and Crashes Involving The Hard Core Drinking Driver, SR-00/01: www.nts.gov/publictn/2000/SR0001.htm
- NTSB website: www.nts.gov

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