

## THE DRIVE TO STAY ALIVE

Driving Under the Influence (DUI) doesn't only mean drinking and driving. Any drug, from illegal substances like marijuana to over-the-counter medicines, can hurt a person's ability to drive.

Drivers with clouded minds cannot react as quickly to unexpected situations that come from road conditions or the actions of other drivers. Research has shown that even small amounts of alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs affect a person's vision, coordination, and reaction time.

Driving is like any other skill—the more you do it the better you get. So it is no surprise that younger drivers are in more accidents. Motor vehicle crashes kill twice as many young people than any other cause of death, including homicide, suicide, cancer, and heart disease.

## IF YOU DRINK... THINK!

Learning about DUI is not about how to get away with something. It's about being responsible and recognizing your limitations. Drivers who use drugs or alcohol risk their lives and the lives of everyone else out on the road when they get behind the wheel. That is why DUI is a very serious crime with very serious penalties. Never put yourself in a situation where you could be the perpetrator—or the victim—of DUI.

## SOBERING STATS

Don't think driving under the influence is a problem?

### Check out these numbers:

- Every day, about 28 people die in drunk-driving crashes. That's one person every 52 minutes.
- The yearly cost of alcohol-related car crashes is more than \$44 billion.
- Drivers under the age of 21 are involved in twice as many fatal crashes. (14 versus 7 per 100,000 licensed drivers )
- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of deaths in 15-20 year olds. Over thirty-six percent of the accidents are alcohol- or drug-related.
- Just a first-time offense can cost the driver upwards of \$10,000 in fines and legal fees.



## RESOURCES

### American Addiction Centers

[www.alcohol.org/dui/DUI](http://www.alcohol.org/dui/DUI)

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drug-impaired-driving](http://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drug-impaired-driving)

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# DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

## A CRASH COURSE





## WRITTEN ALL OVER YOUR FACE

You cannot hide the effects of drugs or alcohol. Police officers are trained to look for tell-tale signs as they question a driver. If they have reason to believe the driver is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, they will ask them to exit the vehicle and perform a series of field sobriety tests. The tests measure a person's reactions, hand-eye coordination, balance, and overall awareness. The police use these tests to determine if a driver should be tested for drugs or alcohol in their system.



## NOW I KNOW MY BAC'S

Police measure a driver's Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) to determine if he or she has had too much to drink. BAC is measured either by a breath or blood test, or sometimes both. A person's BAC will depend on how many drinks they have had over a period of time, and their physical size. A person begins to have clouded judgement and impairment of the sensory-motor skills crucial to driving at .05 BAC. Even someone with a .02 BAC will show moderate effects of alcohol use.

In every state, a BAC of .08 is the level for "legal intoxication." Just three drinks in one hour are enough to put a 160-pound person over the legal limit. Any amount of alcohol is too much for young people. Alcohol is illegal to buy or consume if you are under 21 years old. Every state has a "zero-tolerance" policy (.02 BAC or lower) for underage DUI offenders that can result in arrest or other legal actions.

## ONLY TIME WILL TELL

Some people think that eating will dilute the effects of alcohol, others may think drinking coffee is the answer, or exercising. But the only thing that gets rid of the effects of alcohol is time. In one hour, the body can process and eliminate ("metabolize") 14 grams of ethanol—the drug found in alcohol. There are 12 grams of ethanol in one 12-ounce bottle of beer, or one 8-ounce glass of wine, or a 1 1/2-ounce glass of hard liquor. All of which are defined as a "standard drink." It takes about one hour to recover from the effects of one drink. That's without drinking any more alcohol. The physical facts make it pretty clear that it doesn't take a whole lot to make drinking and driving a dangerous combination.



## MARIJUANA—MAKE NO MISTAKE

Often when a driver tests positive for marijuana use they also test positive for alcohol, making it difficult to assess just how much marijuana impairs coordination and judgement.

But make no mistake about it... using marijuana affects your ability to drive a car. Researchers have found increased doses of THC—the active chemical in marijuana—decreases a person's ability to perform in standard field sobriety tests. Just like with alcohol, the more marijuana used the more the ability to drive is impaired.



Blood tests and a simple mouth swab test can determine levels of THC in a person's bloodstream. States have imposed penalties for driving under the influence of marijuana that match those for drinking and driving. Those penalties are in addition to the penalties for having an illegal drug. After weed was legalized in Colorado, the number of fatalities in crashes where individuals tested positive for THC rose from 18% to 77% in 3 years.

## BEING A FRIEND IS THE KEY

Don't let friendship cloud your judgement about safety. If a friend has been drinking or using drugs, take their keys away. Driving under the influence could end their life, the lives of their passengers, or the lives of others on the road.

Everyone behaves differently when using alcohol or drugs. Some people look like they have it under control. Don't be fooled. Just because they aren't slurring their speech or stumbling around doesn't mean their reactions and instincts aren't clouded. It only takes a split-second of indecision to cause a serious accident. If you are going out, have a sober "designated driver," or call a ride-sharing service, or even a parent—they would rather you call them for a ride than hear from a police officer that you're in an ambulance!



## USE YOUR HEAD ( OR LOSE IT)

It should be common sense that taking any drug, legal or illegal, can affect your ability to drive. If there are warnings about driving on the labels of over-the-counter cold medicines, it stands to reason that taking an illegal drug like LSD or Ecstasy will make it very difficult to keep a car on the road.