

Texas AgriLife Extension Service, through a grant from the Texas Department of Public Transportation (TxDOT), has launched a new campaign, *Watch UR BAC*, to teach Texans about the dangers of alcohol misuse—including binge drinking, the understanding of what is alcohol poisoning as well as the dangers of impaired driving. In 2010, 1,075 Texans were killed in alcohol-related crashes and hundreds of thousands were injured. Nearly half of these drivers had blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of .08 or higher which is at or above the legal limit for intoxication while driving in Texas.

Watch UR BAC is an awareness campaign that refers to the concentration of alcohol in the blood or blood alcohol concentration (BAC) which is used as a measure of the degree of intoxication of an individual. Binge drinking is a continuing problem in Texas, and most who binge drink do not know the amount and effects of the alcohol they are consuming. The program informs adults and youth of various types of alcohol and the amount of alcohol by volume that is contained in beer, wine, and liquor.

The *Watch UR BAC* program is a free resource to Texas community groups, faith-based organizations, schools, and businesses.

Recently, the education team from Texas AgriLife Extension Service, College Station, who has decades of experience in alcohol awareness, drunk driving prevention, passenger safety and training, presented this program to approximately 250 students at Rains High School as a Pre-Prom Safety Awareness Program. Bobbi Brooks, Program Manager, Laura Dean-Mooney, Program Coordinator, and Clint Harnden, Program Coordinator brought a DWI Prevention Simulator and Fatal Vision Goggles for the students to experience the effects of consuming alcohol.

Here are some interesting and useful facts they shared with our students. This information is not only applicable to our youth, but adults as well.

The Law in Texas

The legal limit for intoxication is **.08 BAC** (blood or breath alcohol concentration), but impaired drivers can be stopped and arrested regardless of BAC. Also, it is illegal for anyone to have an open container of alcohol inside the vehicle.

Penalties for a first DWI offense

- Up to \$2,000 fine
- 72 hours to six months in jail
- Loss of driver's license for up to a year
- \$1,000 or \$2,000 annual fee for three consecutive years to retain driver's license
- Penalties increase with each DWI conviction.

Signs of alcohol poisoning

Critical Signs for Alcohol Poisoning

- Mental confusion, stupor, coma, or person can't be roused
- Vomiting
- Seizures
- Slow breathing (fewer than eight breaths per minute)
- Irregular breathing (10 seconds or more between breaths)
- Hypothermia (low body temperature), bluish skin color, paleness

What Should I Do If I Suspect Someone Has Alcohol Poisoning?

- Know the danger signs.
- Do not wait for all symptoms to be present.
- Be aware that a person who has passed out may die.
- If there is any suspicion of an alcohol overdose, call 911 for help. Don't try to guess the level of drunkenness.

911 Lifeline Law

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code, Section 106.04 says that in the event of possible alcohol poisoning, a person under 21 calling for help will not be cited for possessing or consuming alcohol. The immunity for minors is limited to the first person who calls for help, only if he or she stays on the scene and cooperates with law enforcement and medical personnel. This new law does not protect a person from being cited for any other violation.

Social Hosting

It's against the law to make alcohol available to a person under 21 even in your residence, even with their parent's permission.

It can lead to a \$4,000 fine, a year in jail, and an automatic suspension of your driver's license for 180 days upon conviction.

Texas is a Zero Tolerance state

If you are under 21, it's against the law to possess or consume alcoholic beverages; purchase or attempt to purchase alcoholic beverages; drive a motor vehicle or watercraft with ANY detectable amount of alcohol in your system.

What is a drink? Below are general ideas of what makes up a standard-size drink

12 oz. beer (3-5% ABV-alcohol by volume)

8-10 oz. malt liquor (6-10% ABV) *Examples: Smirnoff Ice™, Mike's Hard Lemonade™, Steel Reserve™, Colt 45™*

4-5 oz. wine or champagne (9-16% ABV)

1.5 oz. 80 proof liquor (40% ABV)

1 oz. 100 proof liquor (50% ABV)

.5 oz. Bacardi™ 151 (75.5% ABV)

1 tsp. Everclear™/Grain Alcohol (95.5% ABV)

In keeping track of how many drinks you have had, remember to count **SERVINGS**, not how many cups or glasses you consumed.

For more information on this program or topic, please feel free to contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service office at 903-473-4560, djyoung@ag.tamu.edu, or www.watchurbac.tamu.edu