

## **This Fourth of July, ‘Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over’**

The Fourth of July is one of America’s favorite holidays. And, why not? Families and friends gather to celebrate our country with food, parades, parties, and fireworks.

But there is a very dark side to this great holiday. For many, the celebrations turn from festive to fatal when alcohol-impaired driving crashes occur because someone chose to drive after drinking. In 2013, *Forbes* magazine named the Independence Day holiday “the most dangerous holiday of the year.”

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service *Watch UR BAC* program suggests that if you plan to celebrate with alcohol, you plan a safe ride home. Throughout the region, local police will be out in force this July 4th holiday period, cracking down on drunk driving through increased patrols. Officers remind you to “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.”

Unfortunately, the latest statistics from the Texas Department of Transportation underscore the need for the July 4th crackdown, both statewide and in Rains County. In 2014, there were 1,041 fatalities in Texas involving drivers who were legally drunk at the time of the crash (having a blood alcohol concentration of .08 grams per deciliter or higher).

Fifteen alcohol-related deaths occurred in Texas during the 4th of July holiday period in 2014. Nighttime is particularly dangerous every day of the year, and the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday is no exception.

AgriLife Extension county agent Denita Young says, “This Fourth of July holiday, you can show your patriotism by helping to make our roads safer for everyone. “Remember,” she warned, “to *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*. It’s as simple as that.”

Law enforcement is not messing around this Independence Day: if you’re caught driving drunk, you will be arrested. And keep in mind that aside from putting your life and the lives of others at risk, driving impaired can also lead to serious consequences.

Here are a few simple tips to avoid a drunk-driving disaster:

- Plan a safe way home before the fun begins.
- If you’re impaired, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation so you are sure to get home safely.
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don’t hesitate to contact law enforcement.
- If you know someone who is about to drive impaired or ride with an impaired driver, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service’s *Watch UR BAC* program is a free, statewide program to promote alcohol awareness, the dangers of impaired driving, and friends watching out for friends.**

For more information contact the AgriLife Extension Office at 903-473-4580 or visit us at [rains.agrilife.org](http://rains.agrilife.org). We are also on Facebook at [Facebook.com/pages/Rains-County-Family-Consumer-Sciences](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Rains-County-Family-Consumer-Sciences). Go and “Like” our page to keep up with the latest news, events, and programs offered by Family & Consumer Sciences in Rains County.