

This Fourth of July, There's No Excuse: "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over"

Every year Americans head out on our nation's highways to celebrate the Fourth of July at picnics, parties, parades and more. Unfortunately, a lot of people celebrate by drinking alcohol, which often leads to drunk driving on one of the most heavily traveled holidays of the year.

There were 14 people killed in Texas motor vehicle crashes in 2015 over the Fourth of July holiday (July 3 through July 5) in crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher.

Furthermore, from 2010-2014, 39 percent of all traffic fatalities over the Fourth of July period occurred in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes.

In Texas and every other state, it is illegal to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher. Many of whom were killed over the 2015 Fourth of July holiday died in crashes involving at least one driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC of .15 or higher — nearly double the legal limit.

This Fourth of July, area law enforcement will be out in full force, cracking down on impaired drivers by aggressively targeting those who put lives in danger.

Don't even think about drinking and driving this Fourth of July, or you will be arrested. The 'Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over' campaign means zero tolerance for drunk driving — no excuses.

Young drivers (18 to 34 years old) are especially at risk of driving drunk. In fact, nationwide, 58 percent of the drivers 18 to 34 years old who were killed over the Fourth of July period in 2014 were driving drunk (BAC of .08 or higher). In 2014, more than a quarter (29 percent) of motorcycle operators in fatal crashes had BACs of .08 or higher.

If you're caught driving drunk this Fourth of July, you will be arrested. The consequences of drunk driving are that serious. Not only could you put your life and the lives of others at risk, but a DWI arrest means a loss of freedom and money, including going to jail, losing your license, and paying steep financial expenses. The average DWI cost is about \$10,000.

This Fourth of July, don't risk losing your life or your independence by drinking and driving. Help make everyone's holiday safer by driving sober. Remember, there's no excuse — *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*.

Law enforcement recommends these safe alternatives to drinking and driving:

- Plan a safe way home before the fun begins.
- Designate a sober driver or use public transportation to get home safely.
- Download NHTSA's SaferRide mobile app at: www.nhtsa.gov/link/saferride/, to see if your community has a safe ride home program.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, don't hesitate to contact [**Local Law Enforcement**].
- If you know people who are about to drive or ride after drinking, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

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

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