

## HELP US SAVE LIVES THIS FOURTH OF JULY

For the past 242 years, on July Fourth, Americans have celebrated the birth of our great nation. We set off fireworks, fly American flags, and partake in backyard barbecues and pool parties galore. But as the celebrations wind down and friends and families head home, it's vital we all work together to spread this life-saving message: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*. This Independence Day, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Rains County, *Watch UR BAC* and the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) want to remind you that any time you drive under the influence of alcohol, you put everyone in danger — including yourself. During the Fourth of July holiday weekend, make sure you plan for safe transportation to and from festivities.

During the 2016 July Fourth holiday, 188 people nationwide were killed in crashes involving at least one driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher. In Texas, 14 people lost their lives during the 2016 July Fourth holiday. That's 14 families who will forever remember Independence Day with a heavy heart and nightmarish memories.

“We want our community to enjoy the Fourth of July holiday, but we want them to do so responsibly,” said Denita Young, County Extension Agent – Family & Community Health. “This is why we've partnered with *Watch UR BAC* to help get the message out that *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*. This is not a joke, and it's not a time to test the laws. Drunk driving is illegal, but it's also deadly. It's deadly to the driver, to the driver's passengers, and to other road users in this community. We're imploring you: Please ensure you have a sober driver lined up to get you home safely from your holiday festivities. Doing so could save a life.”

With Fourth of July festivities wrapping up in the evening or late at night, more cars will be on the roads. The rate of alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes is higher at night. During the 2016 July Fourth holiday period, it was more than three-times higher at night than it was during the day.

“We need every single adult who plans to drive on the Fourth of July to hear us loud and clear: Drunk driving is deadly,” said Young. “It's a selfish decision that jeopardizes the lives of many. Please work with us and designate a sober driver. If you plan to be the sober driver, then don't drink, not even one — your friends are relying on you.” We urge drivers to designate a sober

driver before heading out for the evening. If you plan on drinking, plan how you will get around without driving.

Remember these tips for a safe night on the roads:

- It is never okay to drive after drinking. Even if you've had only one alcoholic beverage, designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride sharing service to get home safely.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact local law enforcement.
- Have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take the keys away and make arrangements to get your friend home safely.

This Fourth of July, commit to only driving 100 percent sober, because *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's *Watch UR BAC* program is funded by TxDOT and is provided at no charge to promote alcohol awareness, the dangers of impaired driving, and friends watching out for friends. Contact: Laura Mooney, [ldmooney@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:ldmooney@ag.tamu.edu), for booking information.

Also, for more information contact the local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service 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.