



FACT SHEET

DRIVING-UNDER-THE-INFLUENCE (DUI) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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How serious is the problem?

Drunk driving is the most frequently committed crime in the United States. In 2009, approximately 1.44 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol or narcotics. It is estimated that alcohol and other drugs are a factor in 31% of all fatal automobile accidents. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that in 2009, 33,808 people were killed on our nation's highways--10,839 of these fatalities were alcohol related.

About 3 in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives. An alcohol-related motor vehicle crash kills someone every 48 minutes and injures someone every 2 minutes. Traffic crashes are the greatest single cause of death for every age between the ages of 2 and 34. Beyond the tragedy of lost lives and painful recovery from injuries, alcohol-related accidents exact a huge economic cost. In 2008, the financial costs associated with alcohol-related crashes in the U.S. were estimated at \$51 billion annually.

How does the DUI problem impact young people?

The alcohol-related traffic fatality rate for youth is less than half of what it was in 1988. Youth still are over-represented in fatal crashes compared to the older population. In 2009, 1,314 children under age 14 were killed in traffic crashes. Of those, 181 (14%) occurred in alcohol-impaired driving crashes.

What are the penalties for DUI?

Fines/Penalties

Approximately \$300 - \$5,000

Jail/Community Service

2 days to 2 years

DUI Program

3, 6, 9, 18 or 30 months

Drivers License Suspension

4 months to 5 years

How much does a DUI Cost?

Costs for DUI are estimated at more than \$8,940 (actual costs may vary). Here is a conservative, itemized breakdown for a first offense:

Fines/Penalties.....	\$1,500
Tow/Impound Fee.....	\$215
Treatment Program (First Offender)....	\$626
Court Costs.....	\$800
Insurance Increase.....	\$2,700
Attorney Fees.....	\$2,500
Restitution Fund.....	\$500
DMV Reissue Fee.....	\$100
Total Approximate Cost.....	\$8,941

What is blood alcohol concentration (BAC)?

Blood Alcohol Concentration is a measure of the amount of alcohol in the blood stream expressed as a percentage. In 2009, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico had established an illegal BAC level of .08%.

Is it safe to drive after drinking modest amounts of alcohol?

Just a drink or two can make someone behind the wheel a threat to themselves and others. Drinking alcohol affects a driver's coordination, reaction time and vision (particularly at night). Long before any outward signs of impairment are recognized, the driver's judgment, emotions, and confidence are adversely affected. Even with a BAC as low as .02%, alcohol affects driving ability and crash likelihood. The probability of a crash begins to increase significantly at .05% BAC and climbs rapidly after about .08% BAC.

The speed of alcohol absorption affects the rate at which one becomes drunk. As a person drinks faster than the alcohol can be eliminated, the drug accumulates in the body, resulting in higher levels of alcohol in the blood.

The average person metabolizes alcohol at the rate of about one drink per hour. Only time will sober a person. Drinking strong coffee, exercising or taking a cold shower will not help to get sober.

What is "Admin per se?"

"Admin per se" refers to a relatively new procedure—administrative license suspension—which allows a driver's license to be taken away before conviction when a driver fails or refuses to take a chemical test for alcohol. As of 2010, 41 states, including Washington, D.C., have administrative license suspension laws. In California, a driver's license is suspended for four months on a first offense, and one year for a second offense.

When do most DUIs occur?

Most DUIs occur at night (6 p.m. to 6 a.m.). In 2009, 16% of all drivers in fatal crashes during the week were alcohol impaired,

compared to 31% on weekends. For fatal crashes occurring from midnight to 3 a.m., 66% involved alcohol-impaired driving.

Who is at risk?

Young men between 21 and 24 years old reported driving while impaired more frequently than any other age group. Male drivers involved in fatal motor vehicle crashes are twice as likely as female drivers to be intoxicated with a BAC of .08% or higher.

Per 100,000 population, persons 21 to 24 years old had the highest fatality rate, and persons 16 to 20 years old had the highest injury rate.

In 2009, 56% of the drivers involved in fatal crashes who had been drinking had a BAC of .15% or greater.

The alcohol-impaired driving fatality rate in the past 10 years has declined by 27%—from 0.49 in 2000 to 0.36 in 2009.