

# Drunk Driving

Highway death statistics show 17,448 fatalities in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes in 2001. (National Commission Against Drunk Driving. 2002. *Fatalities in Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes: 2001*. Washington, DC.)

There are approximately 600,000 people injured each year as a result of drunk driving. (National Commission Against Drunk Driving. April 2002. *Preliminary Highway Death Statistics for 2001 Show Fight Against Drunk Driving has Stalled*. Washington, DC.)

Between 1994 and 2001, 40 percent of all highway deaths and 42 percent of all highway injuries were the result of drunk driving. (Ibid.)

One in 10 Americans, or approximately 25 million people, reported driving under the influence of alcohol in 2001, nearly 3 million more than the previous year. (National Household Survey on Drug Abuse [NHSDA]. November 2002. *Drugged Driving*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.)

More than 10 million 12 to 20 year olds reported drinking alcohol in 2000, of which 19 percent were "binge" drinkers and 6 percent were "heavy" drinkers. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. September 2002. *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.)

In 2001, over 8 million persons reported driving under the influence of illegal drugs during the past year. (Ibid.)

Illegal drugs are used by approximately 10 to 22 percent of drivers involved in all motor vehicle crashes. (Ibid.)

Driving under the influence of drugs is more frequent among whites (3.9 percent) than among Native Americans (3.8 percent), Hispanics (2.9 percent), blacks (2.8 percent), or Asians (1.0 percent). Males are more than twice as likely as females to drive under the influence of illegal drugs. (Ibid.)

A recent national survey on driving after alcohol consumption found that 23 percent of youths between the ages 16 and 20 reported driving within two hours of use: 31 percent of the males and 14 percent of the females. More than one-third of the youths had a blood alcohol content greater than 0.8g/dl.

(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA]. 1998. *Driving After Drugs or Alcohol Report*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.)

Even people driving boats with a BAC at half the legal drinking limit, are four times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than people driving boats that are sober. (Smith, G., Keyl, P., Hadley, J., et al. December 2001. "Recreational Boating Fatalities." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 286. [23])

Drunk drivers are 13 times more likely to cause a fatal crash than sober drivers, particularly between the hours of 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. when as many as 25 percent of drivers are estimated to have been drinking. Drivers that have been drinking and driving during these hours of the early morning cause nearly 60 percent of the fatal crashes. (Levitt, S. and Porter, J. 2001. "How Dangerous are Drunk Drivers?" *Journal of Political Economy*. 109. [6])

In 2000, fatally injured drivers with BAC levels of 0.10 or greater were 6 times more likely to have had a prior DUI conviction than fatally injured sober drivers. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [NHTSA]. 2001. *Traffic Safety Facts, 2000: Alcohol*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.)