

# DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Driving under the influence (DUI) can include impairment due to alcohol, drugs, or both. The majority of statistics in this area, though, concern driving under the influence of alcohol. For alcohol-related DUIs, the level of alcohol is measured using the Blood Alcohol Concentration or BAC.<sup>1</sup> In 2012, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico had a law that defined impaired driving at the threshold BAC of 0.08 or higher.<sup>2</sup> The number of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities has declined over the past decade. The following section provides information on DUIs involving both alcohol and other drugs. The statistics in this section rely on data collected by the United States Department of Transportation, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

*The United States Department of Transportation (DOT) provides annual statistics for alcohol-impaired traffic fatalities. DOT information is based on the National Automotive Sampling System (NASS), which takes a random sample of police car crash reports. The statistics also include information from special crash investigations, the large truck crash causation study, the national motor vehicle crash causation survey, and the crash injury research and engineering network.<sup>3</sup>*

- In 2012, 10,322 people died in vehicle crashes involving alcohol-impaired driving, a 4.6 percent increase from 2011 when there were 9,865 fatalities.<sup>4</sup>
- Of all the traffic fatalities in 2012, 31 percent were the result of impaired drivers.<sup>5</sup>

1 U.S. Department of Transportation, "Alcohol-Impaired Driving," *Traffic Safety Facts 2012 Data*, 1, accessed August 4, 2014, <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811870.pdf>.

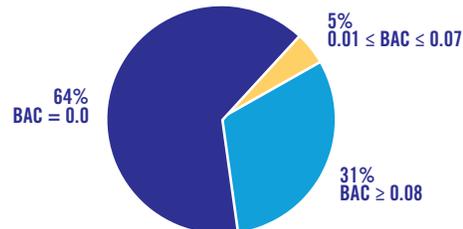
2 Ibid.

3 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *National Automotive Sampling System Brochure*, 1, accessed October 5, 2014, <http://www.nhtsa.gov/NASS>.

4 U.S. Department of Transportation, "Alcohol-Impaired Driving," 1.

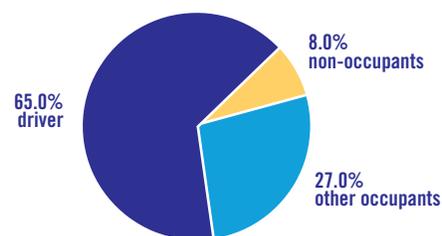
5 Ibid.

**BAC LEVEL OF DRIVERS IN FATAL VEHICLE CRASHES, 2012**



- Of the 10,322 people who died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, 65 percent were the drivers with a BAC of 0.08 or higher. The remaining fatalities involved occupants of any motor vehicle, whether it was being driven by the impaired driver or not (27 percent), and non-occupants (8 percent).<sup>6</sup>

**DEATHS IN ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING, 2012**



- With regard to the non-driver occupants, 16 percent were passengers in a car driven by an individual with a BAC of 0.08 or higher and 11 percent were occupants of other vehicles in 2012.<sup>7</sup>
- Since 2003, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities have decreased 21 percent from 13,096 in 2003 to 10,322 in 2012, despite the slight increase in deaths from 2011 to 2012.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2012, 1,168 children age 14 and younger were killed in any motor vehicle traffic crashes. Of those child fatalities, 20 percent occurred in crashes involving alcohol-impaired driving.<sup>9</sup>

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., Table 1.

8 Ibid., 2.

9 Ibid.

- Of the children age 14 and younger killed in alcohol-impaired crashes, 52 percent were occupants of a vehicle with a driver who had a BAC level of 0.08 or higher, and 38 percent were pedestrians struck by drivers with a BAC level of 0.08 or higher.<sup>10</sup>
- From 2003 to 2012, there was a 1 percent decrease in single-vehicle fatal car crashes and a 1 percent increase in multiple-vehicle fatal car crashes where a driver had a BAC of 0.08 or higher.<sup>11</sup>
- Eighteen percent of single-vehicle crashes where a driver had a BAC of 0.08 were during the daytime, and 46 percent were at night in 2012.<sup>12</sup>
- Six percent of multiple-vehicle crashes where a driver had a BAC of 0.08 or higher were during the daytime, and 22 percent were at night in 2012.<sup>13</sup>
- In 2012, 32 percent of drivers who both were involved in a fatal crash and age 21 to 24 had a BAC of 0.08 or higher, followed by drivers ages 25 to 34 (29 percent) and 35 to 44 (25 percent).<sup>14</sup>

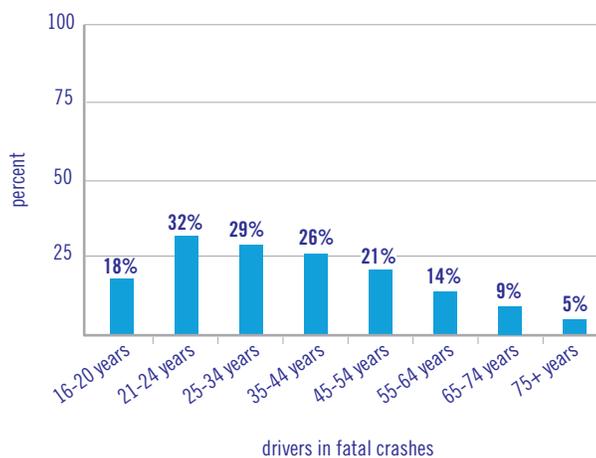
- In 2012, of the alcohol-related vehicle fatalities, 23 percent involved passenger cars, 22 percent involved light trucks, 27 percent involved motorcycles, and 2 percent involved large trucks.<sup>16</sup>
- In 2012, drivers with a BAC of 0.08 or higher involved in fatal crashes were 7 times more likely to have previously been convicted for a DUI compared to drivers in fatal crashes where there was no alcohol involved.<sup>17</sup>

## The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration provides self-reported statistics related to impaired driving. This information is collected from survey respondents who admit to having driven under influence of alcohol, drugs, or both forms of impairment.<sup>18</sup>

- An estimated 10.3 million persons in 2012 reported driving under the influence of illicit drugs during the past year, or 3.9 percent of the population age 12 or older.<sup>19</sup>
- Overall self-reported driving under the influence of illicit drugs decreased 4.7 percent from 2002 to 2012. Between 2011 and 2012, though, an increase of 3.7 percent was observed.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2012, 18- to 25-year-olds had the highest self-report of driving under the influence of illicit drugs with 11.9 percent admitting to having driven under the influence of illicit drugs at least once in the past 12 months.<sup>21</sup>
- In 2012, an estimated 11.2 percent of persons age 12 or older drove under the influence of alcohol in the past year based on self-reported data. This percentage translates to approximately 29.1 million persons.<sup>22</sup>

**DRIVERS IN FATAL VEHICLE CRASHES WITH A BAC ≥ 0.8, BY AGE**



- Of the fatal vehicle crashes where a driver had a BAC of 0.08 or higher, 24 percent were male drivers, and 14 percent were female drivers.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The other 10 percent is unknown information. Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Table 2.

<sup>12</sup> Of the data available figures do not total 100%. Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Of the data available figures do not total 100%. Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 4, Table 3.

<sup>15</sup> Of the data available figures do not total 100%. Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Of the data available figures do not total 100%. Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>18</sup> The data sample for the survey is based on the U.S. population age 12 or older.

<sup>19</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, (Washington, DC: 2013), 29, accessed August 4, 2014, <http://media.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2012SummNatFindDetTables/NationalFindings/NSDUHresults2012.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 37.

*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide statistics for policies aimed at reducing the amount of drivers under the influence on the roads. These data come from multiple sources compiled by the CDC.*

- According to the CDC, sobriety checkpoints may reduce alcohol-related crashes by 9 percent. Sobriety checkpoints are traffic stops where law enforcement officers assess the level of alcohol impairment of drivers.<sup>23</sup>
- Ignition interlocks are believed to decrease arrests for impaired driving by 70 percent. Ignition interlocks are devices installed in the vehicle of individuals who have already been convicted of impaired driving. The driver must blow into the device and register a BAC less than 0.02 or 0.04 for the car's ignition to start.<sup>24</sup>
- Over 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics in 2010. This number represents only 1 percent of the self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults.<sup>25</sup>
- Eighteen percent of motor vehicle driver deaths were the result of drivers being under the influence of drugs other than alcohol.<sup>26</sup>

*The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration provides estimates of the annual cost of DUI's in the United States. The data are obtained from police reports as part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administrations General Estimates System.*

- In 2010, estimates of DUIs from alcohol cost the United States approximately \$199 billion a year.<sup>27</sup> Cost measurements are based on medical costs, work-loss costs, and selected ancillary costs.

- It is estimated that driving under the influence of alcohol costs each U.S. adult approximately \$800 per year.<sup>28</sup>

*The FBI provides official arrest data on DUIs in the United States each year as part of their annual Crime in the United States report.*

- In 2012, 1,282,958 people were arrested for driving under the influence, or 10.5 percent of all arrests in 2012 were for driving under the influence.<sup>29</sup>
- In 2012, 406.4 per 100,000 persons were charged with driving under the influence.<sup>30</sup>
- Between 2008 and 2012, there was a 17.4 decrease in the number of arrests for driving under the influence.<sup>31</sup>
- Of those arrested for driving under the influence in 2012, 75.3 percent were males, and 24.7 percent were females.<sup>32</sup> ★

<sup>23</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Impaired Driving: Get the Facts," *Injury Prevention & Control: Motor Vehicle Safety*, page 1, accessed August 4, 2014, [http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehICLESafety/impaired\\_driving/impaired\\_drv\\_factsheet.html](http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehICLESafety/impaired_driving/impaired_drv_factsheet.html).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010*, 1, accessed August 4, 2014, <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812013.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012*, Table 29, accessed August 4, 2014, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/29tabledata.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012*, Table 30, accessed August 4, 2014, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/30tabledata.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012*, Table 35, accessed August 4, 2014, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/35tabledatacoveroverview.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012*, Table 42, accessed August 4, 2014, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/42tabledatacoveroverview.pdf>.