



# Impaired Driving Prevention Month



The time between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day is described by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals as “one of the deadliest and most dangerous times on America's roadways due to an increase in impaired driving.”

## Fast Facts<sup>1,2</sup>

Drivers with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or higher are considered alcohol-impaired (**drunk driver**) by law.

About **one in three** traffic deaths in the United States involve a drunk driver.

**Prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, and illegal drugs may cause impairment** alone or in combination with each other and/or with alcohol.

In a 2013-2014 study, national results showed **20% of drivers tested positive for at least one drug that could affect safe driving skills.**

## 1 in 2

motor vehicle fatalities included an drunk driver in 2016.<sup>2</sup>



## 535

people were killed in crashes involving a drunk driver in Illinois in 2016.<sup>2</sup>

## 205,000 (2.2%)

Illinois adults are at risk for drinking and driving.<sup>3</sup>

## 1 in 5

Illinois adults are at risk for binge drinking. Binge drinking is five or more drinks on one occasion for men or four or more drinks on one occasion for women.<sup>3</sup>

## 580,000 (6.2%)

Illinois adults are at risk for heavy drinking. Heavy drinking is more than 14 drinks per week for men or more than 7 drinks per week for women.<sup>3</sup>

### Data Sources:

1. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control,

<https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/>

2. U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration,

<https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812450>

3. IDPH, Illinois Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2016



# Strategies to Reduce or Prevent Drunk Driving



## **Drunk Driving Laws**

It is illegal to drive with a BAC at or above 0.08% in the U.S. For people under 21, “zero tolerance” laws make it illegal to drive with any measurable amount of alcohol in their system.

## **Sobriety Checkpoints**

Police are allowed to briefly stop vehicles at specific, highly visible locations to check if the driver is impaired. Police may stop all or a certain portion of drivers. Breathalyzer tests may be given if police have a reason to suspect the driver is intoxicated.

## **Ignition Interlocks**

Interlocks are installed in cars to measure alcohol on the driver’s breath and keep the car from starting if the driver has a BAC above a certain level, usually 0.02%. Ignition interlocks are used to prevent repeat offenses while installed.

## **Multi-component Interventions**

Combining several programs or policies can help prevent drunk driving. The key to these comprehensive efforts is community mobilization and involving coalitions or task forces in designing and implementing interventions.

## **Mass Media Campaigns**

Spread messages about the physical dangers and legal consequences of drunk driving. These can persuade people not to drink and drive and encourage them to keep other drivers from doing so. Campaigns are most effective when supporting other impaired driving prevention strategies.

## **Suspension Laws**

Allow police to take away the license of a driver who tests at or above the legal BAC limit or who refuses testing. States decide how long to suspend the license.

## **Alcohol Screening and Brief Interventions**

Take advantage of “teachable moments” to identify people at risk for alcohol problems and get them treatment as needed. This combined strategy, which can be delivered in health care, university, and other settings, helps change behavior and reduces alcohol-impaired crashes and injuries.

## **School-based Instructional Programs**

School-based programs can be effective at teaching teens not to ride with drunk drivers. More evidence is needed to see if these programs can also reduce drunk driving and related crashes.

Sources: The Guide to Community Preventive Services (The Community Guide), Motor Vehicle-Related Injury Prevention, at [www.thecommunityguide.org](http://www.thecommunityguide.org), and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2013).

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