

Impaired Driving is a Crime That Kills

As a law enforcement official you understand that impaired driving is no accident. It's a serious crime that kills more than 16,000 people and injures nearly 305,000 others every year. Every 32 minutes, someone in America dies in an impaired driving crash. Every two minutes, someone is injured.

Law enforcement agencies in every State and locality are serving on the frontlines in the fight against this deadly threat to America's communities. Traffic crashes are not only a threat to our citizens but are also the leading cause of death for law enforcement officers. The threat is real, deadly and even more important, crashes are 100 percent preventable.

After several years of gradual improvement, more recent impaired driving statistics released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that impaired driving-related deaths increased from 15,976 in 1999 to 16,653 in 2000. America is at a crucial point where we must all do more if we are to significantly reduce the number of alcohol- and drug-related crashes.

You Drink & Drive. You Lose. National Mobilization – Protecting Families from Impaired Drivers

That's why NHTSA and the International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Sheriffs' Association, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association, Operation C.A.R.E, National District Attorneys' Association and National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators, are asking you to promote and take part in the National Mobilization this Fourth of July holiday.

Every July and December, the ***You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*** National Mobilizations are conducted in partnership with criminal justice and traffic safety partners in all 50 States. The goal is to build on the incredible momentum and the hard work already taking place in communities throughout America to stop impaired driving and save lives. The mobilizations take place in July and December for a reason – Summer is when alcohol-related crashes occur most frequently and December is an appropriate time to promote the issue, because of public perception that holiday celebrations increase the consumption of alcohol and impaired driving.

The Message is Clear – Americans Support Getting Tough on Impaired Driving

Communities throughout America support increased criminal justice efforts to stop this illegal and life-threatening offense. Studies show that the majority of Americans consider impaired driving one of our nation's most important social issues, ahead of health-care, poverty/hunger, racism and education.



Impaired Driving is a Crime That Kills

Nearly 97 percent of Americans view impaired driving as a major threat to the community. As a result, the majority of Americans support increased use of enforcement efforts, such as saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints, to protect innocent victims. Furthermore, two-thirds of Americans strongly endorse the use of stricter and more severe penalties against impaired drivers, to protect themselves and their loved ones.

It Takes a Criminal Justice System Approach

Every year 1.5 million impaired drivers are arrested, yet only one arrest occurs for every 772 instances of drinking and driving. As a result, one in three Americans will be affected by this violent crime during their lifetime. The key to protecting innocent victims from impaired drivers is to take a systematic approach that includes highly visible and coordinated efforts by law enforcement, prosecutors, judicial officials, traffic safety organizations and community partners.

Publicize What You are Already Doing

Every law enforcement agency has the legal ability to conduct saturation patrols and most States allow the use of small- and large-scale sobriety checkpoints. Highly visible enforcement is the foundation of the ***You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*** National Mobilization.

As with any criminal offense, the best way to deter impaired driving is through a highly visible effort by the entire criminal justice system – enforcement, prosecution, adjudication and sanctions – to reinforce the belief that violators are criminals and that it is likely that impaired drivers are at high risk of being caught, prosecuted and adjudicated.

You can use existing laws like administrative license revocation, .08 BAC, zero tolerance or vehicle confiscation laws to show the consequences of impaired driving. Prosecutors and judges also can provide the court's perspective and explain what offenders can lose, in time away from work and in high fines and court costs.

By supporting and publicizing saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints during the mobilization, and by locking up violators, you send the message that impaired driving is a crime that will not be tolerated in your community. Eventually, your efforts will prove that the message and consequences are real and will serve as a strong deterrent to anyone thinking of driving impaired.

Law Enforcement Leads the Way

Existing partnerships with State, county and local law enforcement agencies provide a pre-set structure for mobilization activities. Use these relationships to implement the mobilization. Every law enforcement agency has the ability to conduct saturation patrols to identify and apprehend impaired drivers. They are excellent enforcement and communication tools for deterring impaired driving. Small- and large-scale sobriety checkpoints also are allowed in most States and can serve as effective high-profile deterrents.

- Identify organizations that have structured similar outreach activities and ask for their advice and assistance in planning.
- Call a special meeting of departmental and agency chiefs, sheriffs and colonels throughout the State. Ask them to take an active interest in the mobilization and encourage others to participate.
- Promote the issue at conferences and meetings as well as in publications and newsletters.

The Law Enforcement's Case

- Law enforcement is more likely to participate in mobilization activities if obstacles are removed that inhibit their participation. Make it easy and everyone will join the effort.
- Make sure officers are aware that the indicators of intoxication are the same at .08 BAC as they are at .10 and that standard field sobriety tests have been validated at .08 BAC.
- Create interdepartmental partnerships to let officers know which divisions are participating in the mobilization.
- Provide agencies with basic information about the mobilization, including goals, implementation strategies, duration, event dates and evaluation tools.
- Everyone involved in the mobilization is a key partner in its success. Strive for 100 percent law enforcement participation in your State. A united front raises your visibility and creates a powerful deterrent message.
- Solicit input from prosecutors, judicial officials and traffic safety organizations on timing, strategies and evaluation methods for your effort.
- Allow individual departments to devise targeted implementation activities for the mobilization.
- Have law enforcement representatives available who are familiar with mobilization activities to assist community groups interested in joining the campaign.
- Let judges and prosecutors know that there may be an initial increase in impaired driving arrests. Now that the BAC limit has changed from .10 to .08 in

some States, cases that may have been on the edge of the limit can now be prosecuted fully.

- Distribute information on any changes in the law to motorists who are stopped. A good time to do this would be at a sobriety checkpoint or during a saturation patrol.



Sample News Release

[Your Letterhead]

For Immediate Release
[Date]

Contact: [Name]
[Phone]

Law Enforcement Officials Warn Motorists – *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* Unusually Long July 4th Holiday Could be Deadliest Ever

With more people expected to travel on America's highways during the extended Fourth of July holiday, this week could be one of the deadliest periods ever for impaired driving fatalities.

To protect [CITY/TOWN] families during this long holiday period, local criminal justice agencies will join forces [DATES] to protect citizens from impaired drivers. As part of the *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* National Mobilization, local officials will conduct sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols to arrest and prosecute impaired drivers to the fullest extent of the law.

“Impaired driving is no accident – It's a crime that kills every 32 minutes,” said [LOCAL OFFICIAL]. “My agency will be working overtime this weekend to protect families from impaired drivers. Our message is a simple one – *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* Violators will lose their license, time from their job, and lose money in high fines and court costs as well as possibly face imprisonment for vehicular manslaughter or homicide.”

After several years of improvement, more recent impaired driving statistics released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show alcohol-related deaths increased for the first time since 1995 from 15,976 in 1999 to 16,653 in 2000.

Studies from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that the majority of Americans consider drunk driving one of the nation's most important social issues, ahead of healthcare, poverty/hunger, racism and education. Nearly 97 percent of Americans view drunk driving as a major threat to the community. As a result, the majority of Americans support increased use of enforcement efforts like saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints to protect innocent victims. Furthermore, two-thirds of Americans also strongly endorse the use of stricter and more severe penalties against drunk drivers.

Nine out of 10 Americans who participate in social events where alcohol is served feel that people should use designated drivers. [LOCAL ORGANIZATION] suggests that party hosts include alcohol-free beverages and protein-rich foods, along with reminding guest to plan ahead. [LOCAL ORGANIZATION] reminds everyone:

- Don't risk it – If you plan to drive, don't drink.
- Choose a sober designated driver.
- Take mass transit or a taxicab.
- Spend the night where the activity is being held.
- Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.

The *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* National Mobilization, launched in December 1999, is a comprehensive impaired driving prevention effort focused on highly visible criminal justice-related efforts to deter impaired driving and is designed for use by States and communities to save lives. Thanks to the tremendous efforts of thousands of devoted public and private partners, more than 150 million Americans have learned about our lifesaving message from their newspaper, from the Internet, and from radio and television broadcasts. For more information about the campaign please, visit NHTSA's web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

Talking Points

- Every Fourth of July, too many Americans chose to drive after drinking alcohol or using drugs. Impaired driving is no accident. It's a serious crime that kills someone every 32 minutes.
- After several years of improvement, more recent statistics released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show impaired driving-related deaths increased for the first time since 1995 from 15,976 in 1999 to 16,653 in 2000.
- With more people expected to travel during this extended July 4th holiday, this week could be one of the deadliest periods ever for impaired driving fatalities.
- This Fourth of July **[ORGANIZATION]** will be working with **[PARTNERS]** to keep families safe from one of the greatest threats to our communities – Impaired drivers.
- As part of the ***You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*** National Mobilization, law enforcement agencies will be conducting saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints to identify and arrest impaired drivers.
- We are warning everyone – ***You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*** Violators will lose their license, time from their job, and lose money in high fines and court costs as well as possibly face charges for vehicular manslaughter or homicide.
- Losing your freedom because of driving impaired is no way to celebrate the Fourth of July.
- Party hosts and businesses especially need to recognize their responsibilities and know that they can be held liable if their guests or patrons cause an alcohol-related crash.
- Although every year 1.5 million impaired drivers are arrested, only one arrest occurs for every 772 instances of drinking and driving. As a result one in three Americans will be affected by this violent crime in their lifetime.
- The key to stopping impaired drivers is taking a systematic approach with law enforcement, prosecutors, judicial officials and traffic safety partners, each doing their part, to protect innocent victims from impaired drivers.
- I can assure you there is no greater tragedy for a law enforcement officer than knocking on the door of a victim's family to tell them that they have lost a loved one to this senseless crime.



Talking Points

- We are reminding everyone:
 - ❑ Don't risk it – If you plan to drive, don't drink.
 - ❑ Choose a sober designated driver.
 - ❑ Take mass transit or a taxicab.
 - ❑ Spend the night where the activity is being held.
 - ❑ Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.
- Studies show that the majority of Americans consider drunk driving one of the nation's most important social issues, ahead of healthcare, poverty/hunger, racism and education.
- Nearly 97 percent of Americans view drunk driving as a major threat to their community.
- The ***You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*** National Mobilization is a partnership of criminal justice and traffic safety partners in all 50 States committed to reducing deaths from impaired driving.
- Saturation patrols are increased enforcement efforts, often involving multiple agencies, that target a specific area to identify and arrest impaired drivers.
- At sobriety checkpoints, law enforcement officers evaluate drivers for signs of alcohol or drug impairment at certain points on the roadway. Vehicles are stopped in a specific sequence—such as every vehicle or every fourth, fifth or sixth vehicle—depending on the personnel available and traffic conditions.
- When adequately publicized, saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints increase the perceived risk of arrest, influence drivers to make the right choice, and remind the general public that impaired driving is a crime.
- Please celebrate responsibly and don't take a chance – because chances are you will be caught. The choice is yours – designate a driver or one will be appointed for you – straight to jail. Remember: ***You Drink & Drive. You Lose.***



Sample Op-Ed Article

This Fourth of July as you join your neighbors, family and friends to celebrate America's birth and our liberty, don't lose your freedom to impaired driving.

Every year, as a law enforcement officer, I face the deadly aftermath of the Fourth of July. I can assure you the worst part of any officer's duty is knocking on the door of a victim's family to tell them that they have lost a loved one to this senseless crime.

Too many people continue to view impaired driving merely as a traffic offense or victimless crime. Don't be fooled. Impaired driving is one of the most frequently committed crimes in America. It's a crime that kills every 32 minutes and a crime that statistically, will likely affect you personally.

This year the chances are even greater that you or someone you know will be affected. Because of the extended July 4th holiday period this year, [STATE/LOCAL ORGANIZATION] is expecting an increase in the number of impaired driving fatalities. To protect [CITY/TOWN] families from impaired drivers, [STATE/LOCAL ORGANIZATION] are participating in the *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* National Mobilization. Local officials will conduct saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints to arrest and prosecute impaired drivers to the fullest extent of the law.

There will be no warnings this weekend. Our message is a simple one – *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* Violators will lose their license, time from their job, and lose money in high fines and court costs as well as possibly face imprisonment for vehicular manslaughter or homicide.

After several years of improvement, more recent statistics released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that impaired driving-related deaths increased for the first time since 1995, from 15,786 in 1999 to 16,653 in 2000. We have come to a crossroads in our efforts to prevent this deadly crime. America is at a crucial point where we must all do more as communities and as individuals if we are to make significant declines in the number of alcohol- and drug-related crashes.

That's why it's so important to celebrate sensibly. It takes just a little forethought to designate a sober driver before you celebrate. Barring that, use taxi services and other alternative transportation or if possible, spend the night rather than driving home impaired.

If you're hosting a party, accept responsibility for your guests' safety. Don't serve alcohol to underage guests or to anyone who has clearly "had enough." It's not just the conscientious thing to do; serving those who are underage is illegal, and serving anyone who is visibly intoxicated can leave you liable. Offer non-alcoholic beverages and protein-rich snacks. Stop serving alcohol at least one hour before the party ends. Take the car keys away from any guest who is impaired; call a cab or ask a non-drinking guest to provide a safe ride home.

This Fourth of July, don't lose your freedom to impaired driving. The choice is yours – designate a driver or [LOCAL ORGANIZATION] will appoint one for you – straight to jail.

You Drink & Drive. You Lose. National Mobilization

Launched in December 1999, the *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* National Mobilization is a partnership of criminal justice and traffic safety partners in all 50 States that is committed to reducing deaths. Thanks to the combined efforts of thousands of devoted public and private partners, more than 150 million Americans have learned about the campaign from the newspaper, from the Internet, and from radio and television broadcasts. For more information about the National Mobilization, visit www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

