

**Game Day Drinking and Driving  
Know When to Pass**  
Campaign Messages and Media Q&A  
September, 2010 – February 2011

**Campaign Messages**

*Note: Campaign messages are written to motivate and influence football watching drinkers (predominately males, aged 18-54) to find a safe ride home after drinking at a friend's house or at the stadium. The overarching message is that if you've been drinking on game day to pass your keys to a designated driver. The following key messages will serve as the foundation for all PR materials geared to our audience, including talking points for desk-side briefings, grantee and partner outreach and the campaign news release. Key messages will not be provided to media in this format. See media Q&A below.*

**Drinking and driving, no matter how much, is never ok and can lead to serious injury or death.**

- All 50 states have established a threshold making it illegal to drive with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher.
- Nearly 12,000 people were killed in 2008 in U.S. highway crashes involving drivers or motorcycle riders with illegal BACs of .08 or higher, according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- In 2009, there were 27,237 DUI alcohol-related crashes in Texas that resulted in 956 deaths and 17,703 injuries. (Texas Department of Transportation)
- In 2009, 30.9 percent of the total traffic fatalities in Texas were caused by drivers under the influence of alcohol. (Texas Department of Transportation)

**Drinking and driving injuries and fatalities increase over the weekend and at night.**

- 32 percent of drivers involved in fatal crashes on weekends were alcohol-impaired, compared to 15 percent during the week, according to National Highway Safety Administration statistics.
- In Texas, more alcohol related crashes occurred on Saturday than any other day of the week. (Texas Department of Transportation)
- Alcohol impairment among drivers involved in fatal crashes was four times higher at night (32 percent) than during the day (9 percent), according to National Highway Safety Administration statistics.

**Drinking and driving on football game days is a very real problem in Texas and across the nation.**

- Football game days are among the heaviest days for alcohol consumption. (University of Texas Study, Alcohol Use and Collegiate Sports, November, 2007)
- 51% of Texans who drink report having 3 or more drinks while at a football watching party (TxDOT Football Viewing and Drinking research report, 2009).
- 45% of Texans who drink while at a football watching party report driving home. (TxDOT Football Viewing and Drinking research report, 2009).
- Driving fatalities increased 41% after the Super Bowl telecast. (2003 New England Journal of Medicine)
- College home football games are associated with a 13 percent increase in arrests for drunk driving. (2009 University of Colorado Study, College Football Games and Crime)
- In 2009, there were 27,237 DUI crashes in Texas and 1,547 (6 percent) occurred on football game days when a Texas team was playing. (Texas Department of Transportation)
- In 2009, there were 867 fatal crashes involving alcohol and 40 (5 percent) occurred on football game days when a Texas team was playing. (Texas Department of Transportation)

**The consequences for the crime of driving while impaired are serious and real.**

- Impaired drivers risk killing, disabling, disfiguring, and injuring themselves and others — sometimes their own friends and family.
- Along with all these potential consequences, violators also often face other significant personal and financial costs, such as:
  - Jail time, loss of their driver licenses, or being sentenced to use ignition interlocks;

- Higher insurance rates;
- Dozens of additional expenses, including attorney fees, fines and court costs, car towing and repairs, lost time at work, and more;
- Embarrassment and humiliation when family, friends, co-workers, and employers learn of the arrest; and
- Adverse and long-lasting effects on their career prospects and personal aspirations.

**Our message on game day, and every other day, is clear: do not drink and drive. And if you plan on drinking, remember to pass your keys to a designated receiver.**

- If you are planning to drink alcohol with friends, designate a sober driver before going out — and give that person your keys.
- If you are impaired, do not drive — call a taxi, use mass transit, or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely or simply stay where you are;
- Take advantage of your community's safe ride program.
- Promptly report impaired drivers you see on the roadways to law enforcement.
- And remember, if you know people who are about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys — and find them a sober ride.

### **Media Q&A**

*The following Q&A responses can be used by campaign spokespeople. These Qs are intended to address questions about the campaign itself, providing campaign goal sound bytes. Spokespeople will also draw from the messaging above.*

#### **Q. Why are you focusing on game day drinking?**

**A:** Football game days are among the heaviest days for alcohol consumption. Research has found that 83 percent of Texans watch football games either at their house, a friend's house, or at a bar. We've also found a 13 percent increase in arrests for drunk driving during college home football games.

This means that a lot more folks are out drinking and driving during football season than other times of the year, endangering their lives and those of others. We want to make the public aware of this very real problem and reduce game day, sports-related drinking and driving behavior.

#### **Q. What are you doing to get the word out about this problem?**

**A:** In order to curb game day drinking and driving and reduce post-game traffic crashes or fatalities, TxDOT will be informing and educating football fans across the state about the dangers of drinking and driving. We not only want to make Texans aware of the problem, but want to change behavior by encouraging fans to turn over their keys if they plan on drinking.

We will be getting the word out to football fans in their living rooms, their cars, at the stadium and in the bars with television and radio announcements. We will also be conducting a game day tour of college and professional stadiums in an interactive truck display, where we'll be encouraging fans to visit and get information on the dangers of drinking and driving, and will also be inviting sportscasters to broadcast from our mobile living room. We'll be touring our interactive truck display in Lubbock, Austin, Bryan/College Station, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Houston, San Antonio, Rio Grande Valley and El Paso.

#### **Q: Why is the game day drinking and driving program focusing on only some cities in Texas?**

**A:** Game Day Drinking and Driving awareness is being promoted throughout the state. However, we are focusing our greatest efforts in those areas that have college or professional sports teams to reach fans directly.

#### **Q. What happens if I get caught drinking and driving?**

**A:** The consequences for the crime of driving while impaired are serious and real. Impaired drivers risk killing, disabling, disfiguring, and injuring themselves and others — sometimes their own friends and family. Along with all these potential consequences, violators also often face other significant personal and financial costs. Do not get behind the wheel if you've been drinking. Designate a driver, catch a bus, call a cab or call someone you trust to pick you up, or spend the night where you are.

A DWI arrest and conviction in Texas can cost \$17,000 or more: fees include car towing, impoundment, bail, attorney fees, court costs, hearing and fees to regain and retain driver's license, DWI fine, probation costs, fees for extended proof of insurance, plus insurance rate hikes

**Q. What is considered the drunk or impaired driving?**

**A:** In Texas the legal limit for intoxication is .08 BAC (blood or breath alcohol concentration). However, drivers can be arrested with a BAC below .08 when a law enforcement officer has probable cause, based on the driver's behavior.

The signs of impairment differ with the individual. Alcohol steadily decreases a person's ability to drive a motor vehicle safely and the more you drink, the greater the effect. In single-vehicle crashes, the relative risk of a driver with BAC between .08 and .10 is at least 11 times greater than for drivers with a BAC of zero, and 52 times greater for young males. Further, many studies have shown that even small amounts of alcohol can impair a person's ability to drive.

**Q. What should I do if I've been drinking or if I see someone behind the wheel that has been drinking?**

**A:** Fortunately, much of the tragedy that results from impaired-driving crashes could be prevented if everyone followed these safety recommendations:

- If you are planning to drink alcohol with friends, designate a sober driver before going out — and give that person your keys;
- If you are impaired, do not drive — call a taxi, use mass transit, or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely or simply stay where you are;
- Take advantage of your community's safe ride program;
- Promptly report impaired drivers you see on the roadways to law enforcement;
- Wear your seat belt while in a car or use a helmet and protective gear when on a motorcycle, as these are your best defenses against impaired drivers;
- And remember, if you know people who are about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys — and find them a sober ride.

**Q. How can I find out more about drinking and driving?**

**A:** We encourage all football watching drinkers to find a safe ride home after the game. You can visit our Facebook page @ <http://www.facebook.com/KnowWhenToPass> for information, including the interactive truck tour schedule, photos from various "Know When To Pass" game day activities, and ideas for helping keep impaired drivers off of our roads. You can also visit the National Highway traffic Safety Administrations site for statistics and information on finding a safe ride home.