

Game Day Drinking and Driving—Know When to P.A.S.S. – Talking Points

Key Messages

- **Safety first is a TxDOT priority**
 - On or off the road, the priority is safety. No matter the destination, TxDOT wants everyone to arrive safely. Texas motorists can reduce fatalities and injuries with just one simple step—passing the keys.
- **Game day drinking and driving—a serious problem in Texas**
 - 45 percent of Texans who drink while at a football watching party report driving home (“Football Viewing and Drinking Report,” TxDOT, 2009)
 - Football game days are among the heaviest days for alcohol consumption (“Alcohol Use and Collegiate Sports,” University of Texas, November 2007)
- **If you drink, don’t drive—pass the keys to a sober friend**
 - 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 someone who is about to drive impaired, take their keys, and find them a sober ride home.

Q & As

What are some of the statistics associated with game-day drinking and driving?

Drinking and driving, no matter how much, is never okay and can lead to serious injury or death. These 2011 statistics reflect a serious drinking and driving problem in Texas, particularly on game days:

- More than 1,400 DUI alcohol crashes in Texas occurred on football game days when a Texas team was playing. This is approximately 6 percent of total DUI alcohol crashes.
- Also, 40 people lost their lives because of drinking and driving on football game days when a Texas team was playing.
- And there were 24,357 DUI alcohol-related crashes in Texas that resulted in 1,059 deaths.
- In 2006, driving under the influence accounted for 26.5 percent of all motor vehicle traffic fatalities. In 2011, this percentage increased to 34.8 percent.

Do alcohol-related crimes increase during football season?

A recent survey suggests that alcohol-related crimes on high-profile sporting event days may exceed those seen on holidays (“The association between alcohol-related arrests and college football game days,” University of Florida, August 2009.)

- In fact, college home football games are associated with a 13 percent increase in arrests for drunk driving (“College Football Games and Crime,” University of Colorado Study, 2009.)

What are the consequences for driving impaired?

Impaired drivers risk killing, disabling, disfiguring, and injuring themselves and others, sometimes their own friends and family. Along with these potential consequences, violators can also face significant personal and financial costs, such as:

- Jail time, loss of a driver license, or being sentenced to use ignition interlocks;
- Dozens of additional expenses, including attorney fees, fines and court costs, car towing and repairs, lost time at work, higher insurance rates, and more;
- Embarrassment when family, friends, co-workers, and employers learn of the arrest; and
- Adverse and long-lasting effects on their career prospects and personal aspirations.

Why are you focusing on game-day drinking?

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.
- Studies show a 13 percent increase in arrests for drunk driving during college home football games.

What are you doing to get the word out about this problem?

TxDOT’s football season-specific *Don’t Drink and Drive* outreach campaigns are designed to curb game-day drinking and driving and reduce post-game traffic crashes or fatalities. TxDOT will:

- Use television and radio announcements to reach out to football fans in their living rooms, their cars, at the stadium and in the bars.
- Conduct game-day tours of college stadiums to encourage fans to learn more about the dangers of drinking and driving.
- Invite sportscasters to broadcast from our mobile living room.
- Put the interactive truck on display in communities across the state—El Paso, Lubbock, Dallas, San Antonio, College Station, Rio Grande Valley, Houston and Austin.

How much does this campaign cost?

Despite the success of TxDOT's *Drink. Drive. Go to Jail.* campaign, Texas still leads the nation in alcohol-related crashes and fatalities. So our goal with this campaign is to save lives. How do you put a dollar figure on the life of someone you love?

- The campaign budget is approximately \$200 thousand dollars a month for five months
- The campaign is funded using dedicated 410 federal funds, which can only be used to educate the public about the risks of impaired driving

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

Game-day drinking and driving awareness is being promoted throughout the state. However, to reach fans directly we are focusing on areas that have college or professional sports teams.

What happens if I get caught drinking and driving?

If arrested and/or convicted for DWI you could face significant personal and financial costs such as:

- Jail time, loss of your driver license, or being sentenced to use ignition interlocks.
- Dozens of additional expenses, including attorney fees, fines and court costs, car towing and repairs, lost time at work, higher insurance rates, and more.
- Embarrassment when family, friends, co-workers, and employers learn of the arrest.
- Adverse and long-lasting effects to your career prospects and personal aspirations.

What is considered drunk or impaired driving?

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.

- All 50 states have established a threshold making it illegal to drive with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher.

How does alcohol affect the ability to drive?

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 a 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 (from NHTSA website; www.NHTSA.gov/search?q=DADSS see article titled "Drivers Over .08 BAC").
- Many studies have shown that even small amounts of alcohol can impair a person's ability to drive.

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

If you are planning to drink alcohol with friends, designate a sober driver before going out, and give that person your keys. And, if you know someone who is about to drive drunk or get into a car with someone who's been drinking, take their keys and help them find a sober ride.

How can I find out more about drinking and driving?

You can visit our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/KnowWhenToPass> for information, including ideas for helping keep impaired drivers off of the roads. You can also visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration site for statistics and information on finding a safe ride home.