

Drunk Driving

In 1997, more than 327,000 persons were injured in crashes where police reported that alcohol was present -- an average of one person injured approximately every 2 minutes. (*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (1998). Traffic Safety Facts 1997. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.*)

The rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes is 3.5 times as high at night as during the day (59.8 percent vs. 17.0 percent). For all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate is 4.9 times as high at night (15 percent vs. 3 percent). (*Ibid.*)

In 1997, 29 percent of all fatal crashes during the week were alcohol-related, compared to 52 percent on weekends. For all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate was 5 percent during the week and 12 percent during the weekend. (*Ibid.*)

The highest intoxication rates in fatal crashes in 1997 were recorded for drivers 21-24 years old (26.3 percent), followed by ages 25-34 (23.8 percent) and 35-44 (22.1 percent). (*Ibid.*)

All states and the District of Columbia now have 21-year-old minimum drinking age laws. NHTSA estimates that these laws have reduced traffic fatalities involving drivers 18 to 20 years old by 13 percent and have saved an estimated 17,359 lives since 1975. In 1997, an estimated 846 lives were saved by minimum drinking age laws. (*Ibid.*)

In 1997, 16,189 people were killed in the United States as a result of alcohol-related traffic crashes -- an average of one every 32 minutes. These deaths constituted approximately 38.6 percent of the 41,967

total number of traffic fatalities which occurred in 1997. (*Ibid.*)

About three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives. (*Ibid.*)

In 1997, there was an estimated total of 1,477,300 arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol. (*Federal Bureau of Investigation. (released November 22, 1998). Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports, 1997, p. 222. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.*)

In 1996, 20 percent (184) of children under age 5 killed in traffic fatalities were killed in alcohol-related fatalities; 16.7 percent (134) children age 5-9; 23.3 percent (248) children age 10-14; and 34 percent (1,771) adolescents age 15-19. (*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (1997). Fatal Accident Reporting System. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.*)

The highest number of traffic fatalities to occur in 1995 on a "single" day holiday was on Saint Patrick's Day (68.1 percent). (*Ibid.*)

Drunk driving is the nation's most frequently committed violent crime. (*Summary of Statistics: The Impaired Driving Problem. (1996). Irving, TX: Mothers Against Drunk Driving National Office.*)

Traffic crashes are the greatest single cause of death for every age from six through 28. Almost half of these crashes are alcohol-related. (*Miller T. & Blincoc, L. (1994). "Incidence and Cost of Alcohol-involved Crashes." Accident Analysis & Prevention, Vol 26, Number 5.*)

Note: OVC makes no representation concerning the accuracy of data from non-Department of Justice sources.