

Let's Put a Stop to Drunk Driving

By Lesley Fernandez

Do you ever wonder how many people are killed or injured in drunk driving incidents? Every 51 minutes, someone is killed in a drunk driving crash and every 120 seconds, someone is injured. These facts are just a few reasons why we should put a stop to drunk driving.

Some people think drunk driving is fine. They say, “Drunk driving doesn't kill people; people kill people”. They think it's acceptable to drive under the influence because they think they are unaffected by the alcohol, or “sober”. However, reaction times of a drunk driver may be reduced up to ten to thirty percent. Vision may become blurred and the judgments of distance, speed, and hazards are likely to be diminished.

We should put a stop to drunk driving because over 15,000 people die annually in alcohol-related traffic incidents. According, to the Center for Disease Control, the government attempts to stop drunk driving through **drunk driving laws, sobriety checkpoints, ignition interlocks, multi-component interventions, mass media campaigns, alcohol screening, and suspension law**. Drunk Driving laws make it illegal nationwide to drive with blood alcohol concentration at or above 0.08 percent. Sobriety checkpoints allow police to briefly stop vehicles at specific highly visible locations to see if the driver is impaired. Police may stop all or a

certain portion of drivers. Breath tests may be given if police have a reason to suspect the driver is intoxicated. Ignition interlocks installed in cars measure alcohol on the driver's breath. Interlocks keep the car from starting if the driver has blood alcohol concentration above a certain level, usually 0.02 percent. They're used for people convicted of drunk driving and are highly effective at preventing repeat offenses while installed. Multi-component interventions combine several programs or policies to prevent drunk driving. Mass media campaigns spread messages about the physical dangers and legal consequences of drunk driving. They persuade people not to drink and drive and encourage them to keep other drivers from doing so. Alcohol screening takes advantage of "teachable moments" to identify people at risk for alcohol and get them treatment as needed. Suspension laws allow police to take away the license of a driver who tests at or above the legal BAC (blood alcohol concentration) limit or who refuses testing. The state decides how long to suspend their licenses.

Unfortunately, no matter how hard the government works to stop drunk driving, they still cannot stop it. According to DoSomething.org a drunk driver will drive 80 times under the influence before their first arrest. Each day 300,000 people drive drunk, but fewer than 4,000 are arrested. Over 1.2 million drivers were arrested in 2011 for driving under the influence of alcohol. In 2011, 9878 people were victims of drunk driving. An estimated 32 percent of fatal crashes

involve an intoxicated driver. Over 40 percent of the total number of traffic fatalities each year are alcohol-related. We need everybody to work together to stop drunk driving.

These are all the reasons why we should put a stop to drunk driving. We should put a stop so no one will be killed or injured. It's not worth putting people's lives at risk. So what are you going to do to make a difference?