

You Drink & Drive. You Lose!



DRIVING HOME THE FACTS— ABOUT ZERO TOLERANCE

Impaired driving poses a significant threat for underage drivers (individuals under the age of 21) and presents a unique challenge to law enforcement agencies.

Young drivers are at high risk to be involved in an Alcohol-related crash.

Research shows that more than 33 percent of all fatalities of 15 through 20-year-olds result from motor vehicle crashes, and of these, more than 35 percent are alcohol-related. In 2005, 16% of drivers ages 16 to 20 who died in motor vehicle crashes had been drinking alcohol (NHTSA 2006). Young impaired drivers are involved in fatal crashes at approximately twice the rate of drivers aged 21 and over. Research has shown that young impaired drivers are less likely to be detained and arrested than their adult counterparts; yet young men ages 18 to 20 (under the legal drinking age) reported driving while impaired more frequently than any other age group (Shults et al. 2002, Quinlan et al. 2005).

Zero tolerance applies different standards to underage drivers than to the rest of the driving population.

Blood alcohol concentration (BAC) laws are different for drivers under the age of 21 because it is already illegal for these individuals to buy or possess alcoholic beverages. BAC levels reflect the level of alcohol in an individual's system. While BAC levels for underage drivers vary from state to state (.00 or .02), zero tolerance laws make it illegal for those under the age of 21 to drive after consuming any amount of alcohol.

Zero tolerance begins with zero tolerance of underage drinking.

Parents, law enforcement agencies, and communities need to take a zero tolerance stand against underage drinking. It is the most effective way to reduce youth alcohol-related crashes. Underage drinking should not be viewed as a right of passage. It is dangerous as well as a significant factor in future alcohol dependence.

Zero tolerance means zero chances.

Zero tolerance laws provide for different policies regarding underage drivers because of their increased crash risk at low BAC levels. More 18- and 19-year-olds die in low BAC alcohol-related crashes than any other age group. Penalties for violating zero tolerance laws may include license suspension and revocation, significant fines and community service.

Strong enforcement of zero tolerance laws works and exists to ensure safer driving habits for young people. Minimum-age drinking laws have saved an estimated 18,220 lives since their inception in 1975. Zero tolerance laws work to achieve the same goal.



Check out the Virtual Bar at: <http://www.b4udrink.org/>

Have a Safe and Wonderful Holiday Season.