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Metropolitan Police Department

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Watch Your BAC (Blood Alcohol Content): Decide Before You Drive

Drunk Driving Facts

- The legal limit for Blood Alcohol Content in the District of Columbia is .08 percent. It is a crime (Driving While Intoxicated, or DWI) to have a BAC at or above that level while operating a motor vehicle. However, if a person under the age of 21 is found to be operating a motor vehicle with any measurable amount of alcohol, he or she will be placed under arrest and charged with DWI.
- You could be arrested and convicted for Driving Under the Influence (DUI) at a level lower than the legal limit. Under DC Code, a driver can be charged with a DUI offense if, in addition to a BAC reading, the officer

has other signs of impairment from a structured field sobriety test and from observations of the suspect's driving behavior. Even at low levels of BAC, you can still be at risk.

- Your Blood Alcohol Content could continue to rise, even after you have stopped drinking. Your body can only eliminate alcohol at a rate of about .015 percent an hour. If you have had several drinks in a short time frame, your BAC could actually rise significantly, even after you have stopped drinking. That's why it's essential to allow sufficient time for your body to eliminate the alcohol in your system.
- The consequences if you are arrested and convicted for a first-time drunk driving offense include up to 90 days in jail, six months license revocation, sky-rocketing insurance rates and thousands of dollars in fines. And that's if you're lucky. An alcohol-related traffic collision that results in injuries or death could tragically change your life, and the lives of those involved in the collision, forever.

Think a DUI can't happen to you? Think again.

The majority of drunk driving arrests are first-time offenders, many of whom are well-intentioned, usually responsible people who "felt fine" to drive, when in fact they were a risk to themselves and others.

Why face the many penalties when there are so many alternatives to getting behind the wheel? Call a cab (during major holidays, the Sober Ride program—1-800-200-TAXI—provides free cab rides home); designate a driver; call a friend; stay at your hotel or home ... but please don't drink and drive. And don't let your friends, either. Always celebrate responsibly!

Be educated. Make more informed decisions after drinking, and help your friends and family make them too.

For More Information

- The [penalties for drinking and driving](#) include fines, suspended licenses, and jail time.
- For more information regarding DC's laws on drinking and driving, contact the Traffic Safety Unit at (202) 727-4315.

Report Suspicious Activity



If you see something, say something.

911 for Police Service



Dial 911 to request police, fire and emergency medical services.

Your Police District - PSA



Work with your PSA team members to fight crime and disorder in your neighborhood.

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