



MADD Warns Impaired Motorists "You Drink. You Drive. You Lose."

Nationwide Labor Day Law Enforcement Crackdown on Drunk Driving
Drunk Driving Nation's Most Frequently Committed Violent Crime

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DALLAS & NEW YORK (Aug. 22, 2005) - Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) applauds the more than 11,500 law enforcement officers from across the country that will be cracking down on drunk driving--America's most frequently committed violent crime--over the Labor Day holiday. The national crackdown, "*You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*" involves concentrated and highly publicized sobriety checkpoints and other high-visibility enforcement efforts to keep impaired drivers off the roads.

"Checkpoints work. They are easy to implement. And, they are one of the most effective tools we have to deter drunk driving" stated MADD National President Glynn R. Birch. "There are numerous consequences to driving impaired and this crackdown will help ensure motorists are protected from potential tragedy. People typically drive drunk many times before they are ever caught and this high-visibility enforcement effort lets the public know well in advance, 'if you are going to be drinking, stay at home or designate a sober driver'."

The national impaired-driving crackdown is complemented by a \$14 million national advertising campaign that puts drivers on notice that if they drive impaired, they will be caught and prosecuted. The new federal surface transportation reauthorization bill authorizes \$29 million a year to publicize and implement high visibility law enforcement efforts nationwide. "This provides a strong foundation for continued success in driving down the numbers resulting in lives saved and injuries prevented," said Birch.

Each year, nearly 17,000--approximately the amount of people it would take to fill some sports arenas, die in alcohol-related fatalities and another half a million are injured. It's an offense that occurs approximately every 30 minutes, and according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report, more than 1.4 million people nationwide were arrested in 2003 for driving under the influence.

There are still 10 states (Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming) that do not conduct checkpoints despite the fact that surveys and polls throughout the 1980s and 1990s show that 70 to 80 percent of those polled are in favor of using more sobriety checkpoints in order to combat drunk driving. Public support tends to increase as communities experience checkpoint use.

Sobriety checkpoints involve law enforcement evaluating drivers for signs of alcohol or drug impairment at certain points on the roadway. Saturation patrols are concentrated enforcement efforts that target impaired drivers by observing moving violations such as reckless driving, speeding, aggressive driving, and others.

Birch reminds everyone to plan ahead. "It really is that simple. If you are going to a party and plan to drink alcohol, designate a sober driver. It's important to note that impairment begins with the first drink, so your safest choice is to use public transportation, take a cab or find a sober driver."

MADD reminds everyone:

- | Be responsible and don't risk it ... you will be caught.
- | If you plan to drink, choose a designated driver before going out.
- | Take mass transit, a taxicab, or ask a sober friend to drive you home.
- | Spend the night where the activity is being held.
- | Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.
- | Always buckle up - it's your best defense against an impaired driver.

Founded in 1980, MADD is celebrating its 25th anniversary and the more than 300,000 lives the grassroots organization has helped save. MADD's mission is to stop drunk driving, support the victims of this violent crime and prevent underage drinking. For more information, visit www.madd.org or call 1-800-GET-MADD.

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