



## FSA - Keeping You Safe

### The Truth About Impaired Driving

December is National Drunk and Impaired Driving Month. In the United States, a person dies in a drunk driving accident every 45 minutes. All of these tragic accidents are preventable, yet they happen again and again. During this time of year, many drivers drink at holiday parties without a plan for how to get home. Here's **the sobering truth about impaired driving** – and the deadly consequences of not taking it seriously.

### BAC and DUI Testing

Your fitness to drive after drinking is determined by your **blood alcohol content**, or **BAC**. It is a measure of the amount of alcohol present in your bloodstream, calculated by concentration of alcohol per volume amount of your blood. BAC is impacted by several factors, starting with the number of standard alcoholic drinks you've consumed in a given period of time.

What's a standard drink? It depends on what you're drinking, as some types of alcohol are more concentrated than others. According to Stanford University, one standard drink could be:

- One 12 oz. regular beer (4.5-6% alcohol)
- One 12 oz. hard seltzer (5% alcohol)
- One 7 oz. malt liquor (7% alcohol)
- One 5 oz. glass of wine (12% alcohol)
- One 1.5 oz. shot of hard liquor (40% alcohol)
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Once you reach a .08 BAC, the risk of crashing while driving increases exponentially. That's why it's illegal to drive when over this limit in all 50 states. (In Utah, it's even lower: .05 BAC). To determine whether a driver is over the limit, law enforcement officers use a device called a breathalyzer to test their BAC.

### Knowing Your Limit

In addition to the number of alcoholic drinks you've consumed, several other factors determine how quickly (and how much) drinking affects your BAC. You also need to consider your gender, body weight, the amount of time in which the drinks were consumed, medication and how much food you've eaten.

For more tips please visit the Florida Sheriffs Association's Crime Prevention Tips: [flsheriffs.org/crime-prevention](https://flsheriffs.org/crime-prevention).

Everyone is different – that’s why it’s important to know YOUR limit when it comes to driving. A BAC of .08 is the legal limit for driving, but it’s important to consider that you could be unsafe to drive even if your BAC is below that limit. If you just feel “buzzed,” you still shouldn’t get behind the wheel, as buzzed driving is impaired driving. According to the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#), 2,041 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes in 2020 in which a driver had a BAC of .01 to .07.

### **Don’t Take Chances**

Impaired driving can result in a serious or even fatal accident. You could lose your own life or take someone else’s. **It just isn’t worth it.** If that wasn’t enough reason, there are also severe legal consequences on the line, including extensive fines, revocation of your license and possible jail time.

The solution is simple: **If you are drinking, do not drive.** If you plan to drink, always plan ahead of time, whether that’s arranging for a ride-sharing service, a designated driver or a taxi. Once you’re drinking, your judgement about whether you should drive may be inhibited. Always have a plan.

If you see a friend who has been drinking, don’t worry about being polite – do something. Even if you have to take their keys and arrange a ride for them, it’s better to be in an awkward situation for a few minutes than deal with a lifetime of regret.

### **Be Informed, Stay Safe**

Don’t ignore the risks of impaired driving until it’s too late. This month, and every month, be a responsible citizen. Know your limit. Get home safely. Don’t drink and drive.

[Click here to access more helpful resources](#) and public safety tips from the Florida Sheriffs Association.