

AUGUST/LABOR DAY CRACKDOWN
SAMPLE Op-Ed
490 WORDS



Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.
National Labor Day Enforcement Crackdown

Drunk driving is one of America's deadliest crimes. In fact, during 2004, nearly 13,000 people were killed in highway crashes involving an impaired driver or motorcycle operator with an illegal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher. The picture for motorcycle operators is particularly bleak. Forty-one percent of the 1,672 motorcycle operators who died in single-vehicle crashes in 2004 had BAC levels of .08 or higher.

That's why local law enforcement officials will be joining with thousands of other law enforcement and highway safety agencies across the nation during August and the Labor Day holiday to launch an aggressive new crackdown on impaired drivers called: *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.*

Our message is simple. No matter what you drive – a passenger car, pickup, sport utility vehicle or motorcycle – if we catch you driving impaired, we will arrest you. No exceptions. No excuses. We will be out in force conducting sobriety checkpoints, saturation patrols and using undercover officers to get more drunk drivers off the road. We want everyone to play it safe and always designate a sober driver or find a different way home if they have been out drinking.

Driving with a BAC of .08 or higher is illegal in every state. Although drunk driving fatalities across the nation slightly declined in 2003 and 2004, these fatalities are projected to increase in 2005. Moreover, according to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, more than 1.4 million people were arrested for driving under the influence during 2004.

Much of the tragedy from drunk driving can be prevented with a few simple precautions before going out to celebrate:

- Whenever you plan on consuming alcohol, designate a sober driver before going out and give that person your keys;
- If you're impaired, call a taxi, use mass transit or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely;
- Use your community's Sober Rides program [**insert your local Sober Rides specifics here**];
- Promptly report drunk drivers you see on the roadways to law enforcement;
- Wearing your safety belt while in a car or using a **helmet and** protective gear when on a motorcycle is your best defense against an impaired driver;
- And remember, *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*. If you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

Drunk driving is simply not worth the risk. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for impaired driving can be significant. Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver's license, higher insurance rates, attorney fees, time away from work, and dozens of other expenses.

Don't take the chance. Drunk driving is a serious crime. Remember: *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.*

For more information, visit www.StopImpairedDriving.org.

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