



February 2007

www.dwiresourcecenter.org

An Introduction to Detecting Impaired Driving

Reproduced from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

More than a million people have died in traffic crashes in the United States since 1966, the year of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act, which led to the creation of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, or NHTSA.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s more than 50,000 people lost their lives each year on our nation's streets, roads and highways. Traffic safety has improved considerably since that time: the annual death toll has declined substantially, even though the numbers of drivers, vehicles, and miles driven all have increased. When miles traveled are considered, the likelihood of being killed in traffic during the 1960s was three to four times what it is today.

The proportion of all crashes in which alcohol is involved also has declined. The declines in crash risk and the numbers of alcohol-involved crashes are attributable to several factors, including the effectiveness of public information and education programs, traffic safety legislation, a general aging of the population, and law enforcement effort.

NHTSA research contributed to the improved condition, in part, by providing patrol officers with useful and scientifically valid information concerning the behaviors that are most predictive of impairment. Continued enforcement of DWI laws will be a key to saving lives in the future. For this reason, NHTSA sponsored research leading to the development of a new DWI detection guide and training materials, including a new training video. Many things have changed since 1979, but like the original training materials, the new detection guide describes a set of behaviors that can be used by officers to detect motorists who are likely to be driving while impaired. Building upon the previous NHTSA study, the researchers

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The DWI Resource Center is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt New Mexico organization formed to reduce the social and economic impact of DWI in New Mexico through public awareness, education, prevention programs and research. The Center also provides assistance to victims and serves as a central clearinghouse for information on DWI and victims' rights.

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DWI
Resource Center, Inc.
P.O. Box 30514
Albuquerque, NM 87190-0514

interviewed officers from across the United States and developed a list of more than 100 driving cues that have been found to predict blood alcohol concentrations, or BACs, of 0.08 percent or greater. The list was reduced to 24 cues during three field studies involving hundreds of officers and more than 12,000 enforcement stops. The driving behaviors identified by the officers are presented in the following four categories:

- 1) Problems in maintaining proper lane position,
- 2) Speed and braking problems,
- 3) Vigilance problems, and
- 4) Judgment problems.

The cues presented in these categories predict that a driver is DWI at least 35 percent of the time. For example, if you observe a driver to be weaving or weaving across lane lines, the probability of DWI is more than .50, or 50 percent. However, if you observe either of the weaving cues and any other cue listed in this booklet, the probability of DWI jumps to at least .65, or 65 percent. Observing any two cues other than weaving indicates a probability of DWI of at least 50 percent, although some cues, such as swerving, accelerating for no reason, and driving on other than the designated roadway, have single-cue probabilities greater than 70 percent. Generally, the probability of DWI increases substantially when a driver exhibits more than one of the cues.

Hiring A New Employee? Check out their DWI record online!

A DWI on an employee's record can be an indicator of alcohol & drug-related problems, lack of personal responsibility, and poor decision-making skills. Check your employees' records before you hire! The DWI Resource Center offers employers a free online DWI offender database, containing records from the last five years. Check your employees' records today by visiting our website:

<http://www.dwiresourcecenter.org>

Alcohol, Drugs Still Play Key Role in Defining 'Fun' Colleges

From the Princeton Review to CollegeHumor.com, the availability of alcohol and other drugs remains a key measure of a college's "fun" quotient, the Washington Post reported January 3, 2007.

CollegeHumor.com, for example, uses indicators like bar closing hours and drug interest alongside availability of free condoms and percentage of students in fraternities

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Please remember:
your best defense against a drunk driver is to
WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT!

Everywhere. Everytime. Everyone.

and sororities to rate schools. Likewise, Princeton Review's list of top party schools relies heavily on estimated use of alcohol and other drugs.

However, some are calling for a broader definition of "fun" in ranking schools. Frederic D. Homer, a philosophy professor at the University of Wyoming, said that college students tend to distinguish between fun with no purpose and fun with a purpose -- the difference, say, between an intramural soccer game and a varsity contest. He found that students used the same criteria for drinking: low-level consumption was considered casual fun, but binge drinking fell into the category of fun with a purpose -- to escape from stress or other problems.

School administrators often work hard to create "fun" activities that don't involve alcohol, such as "dive-in" movies shown at an indoor pool, or a trip to the big city. But many students say that a big part of the fun in drinking is that it is illegal, and involves some risk -- an appealing mix to young adults, especially when it involved friends.

Citizens Take Action to Stop DWI

A New Mexico program developed by a former police officer teaches residents how to spot drunk drivers and report them to authorities, the Santa Fe New Mexican reported December 1, 2007.

The first meeting of Road Watch was recently held in Santa Fe; among the 20 attendees were victims of drunk-driving incidents as well as other concerned citizens. Participants were told to look for such signs of impairment as swerving, drifting, tailgating, and driving slower than the posted speed limit. Instruction also was given on how to report a suspected drunk driver, including providing details like a license-plate number and vehicle description to the police dispatcher.

"All we need to do is use the resources that are already available to us," said Doug "Raven" Hicks, the founder of Road Watch. "It's called our eyes. All you need to do is use your eyes."