

Get the Facts about Drugged Driving

While the consequences of drunk driving have become well known over the last twenty years, the subject of drugged driving has received fairly limited attention. Unfortunately, too many Americans are unaware of the dangers and uncertain about the possibility of being arrested for drugged driving.

- Over 8 million persons aged 12 or older, or 3.6% of the U.S. population, reported driving under the influence of illegal drugs during the past year (2001). This was an increase from the rate of 3.1 percent in 2000 according to the 2002 National Household Survey of Drug Abuse (NHSDA).
- Rates of drugged driving for young adults aged 18 to 34 increased from 2000 to 2001.
- The 2002 NHSDA revealed that the rate of drugged driving increased with each year of age peaking among 19 year olds at 16 percent and generally decreased with increasing age among those aged 20 or older.
- According to a 2002 survey among teen drivers conducted by SADD, Inc. (Students Against Destructive Decisions/Students Against Driving Drunk) and Liberty Mutual Group, driving after marijuana use is more prevalent (68 percent) than driving after alcohol use (48 percent of those who drink "regularly"). More than half the teens who reported illegal drug use also reported that they were not concerned about riding in a car with a driver who is using illegal drugs (57 percent).
- The 2002 NHSDA also revealed that among adults aged 18 or older, those who were unemployed were more likely than full or part-time workers to report driving under the influence of illegal drugs during the past year.
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), illegal drugs are used by approximately 10-22 percent of drivers involved in all motor vehicle crashes, often in combination with alcohol. In 1996, the percentage of drivers aged 16 to 20 who drove within 2 hours after using marijuana and another illegal drug was 39.7 percent.
- The Department of Transportation has published two studies examining the impact of marijuana on driving performance. Marijuana - the most widely abused illegal drug - slows a driver's perception of time, space, and distance.
- Research indicates that cocaine causes drivers to speed, change lanes without signaling and puts other innocent people at risk of a deadly accident.
- NHTSA estimates that only 15 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes had their blood alcohol content tested, suggesting that the incidence of driving while impaired by alcohol or other drugs is potentially significantly underestimated.
- While it is illegal in all states to drive a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, drugs other than alcohol, or a combination of alcohol and other drugs, there is no consistent method across states for identifying drug impairment. As a result, we do not know the full impact of illegal drug use on public safety.

More info: www.theantidrug.com, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign