

# **Driving Under the Influence (Dui)**

## **Encyclopedia Article**

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# Driving Under the Influence (Dui)

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE is a term that refers to the operation of a motor vehicle after consuming alcohol and being affected by it in some way. It may be used as a legal term denoting a lesser offense than DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED (DWI). Specific blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) limits are associated with a DUI offense. These vary among states and countries but are often between .05 percent and .10 percent (50 milligrams per deciliter [mg/dl] and 100 mg/dl). In the United States, most states place the limit at .010 percent to be classified as driving under the influence. Some states have reduced the legal limit to 0.08 percent, but Congress rejected legislation in 1998 that would have required all states to lower the drunken driving arrest threshold to .08 percent.

There is a strong correlation between a BAC greater than 0.05 percent and risk of serious injury or death while operating a motor vehicle. After the BAC reaches .08 percent or more, the probability of a crash climbs rapidly. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that in 1998, alcohol was involved in 39 percent of all fatal crashes (almost 16,000 fatalities) and 7 percent of all crashes. NHTSA estimates that three out of ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash sometime during their lives.

*Four of the 40 officers at a roadblock in Cary, North Carolina, stop cars to check for drunk drivers on December 13, 1997. During the Saturday night sweep, officers statewide charged 69 people with DWI and seized six cars. (AP Photo/Karen Tam)*

## See Also

Breathalyzer; Dramshop Liability Laws; Driving, Alcohol, and Drugs; Drug Interactions and Alcohol; Drunk Driving; Mothers Against Drunk Driving; Students Against Destructive Decisions)

## Bibliography

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