



## **To Enjoy the Holidays, Drive Sober**

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The holidays have arrived, along with more opportunities to attend family celebrations, parties, or simply have some extra time off from work. Unfortunately, this festive time of year also allows for more occasions to drink alcohol, which can sometimes lead to drinking and driving. In fact, there are more alcohol-related traffic fatalities between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day in the United States than any other time during the year.

In Washington State alone, **nearly half** of all traffic deaths from 2006-2010 involved a motor vehicle driver under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. To help ensure a safer holiday season, here are some important things to consider before heading out to celebrate:

- If you plan to drink any alcohol, designate a driver who will remain sober the entire evening! You can also arrange for a taxi to take you home, or simply plan to stay overnight.
- One 12-ounce can of beer has about the same amount of alcohol as one 6-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of hard liquor, like vodka.
- The only thing that will sober you up is time. Drinking coffee or taking a cold shower will not make you sober up any faster.
- Protect yourself! Don't get in a car with a driver who has been drinking alcohol.

If you are planning to host a holiday party and serve alcohol, there are steps you can take to make sure everyone celebrating avoids drinking and driving:

- Make sure you have a good variety of non-alcoholic beverages available and plenty of food too.
- Never pressure anyone to have an alcoholic drink and do not serve any alcohol to a guest you believe to be intoxicated.
- Avoid serving holiday punch with alcohol. Guests may not realize how much they are drinking and could end up consuming much more alcohol than they planned.

- Be aware of how much your guests are drinking and set limits. 85% percent of drinking and driving incidents are reported by people who also report binge drinking. Binge drinking means five or more drinks for men or four or more drinks for women within a short time period.
- Stop serving alcohol at least one hour or more before the party ends.
- Include guests in your safety plans. When each group arrives, ask who their designated driver is, and keep the phone numbers of local taxi companies handy.
- Do not let guests drive if they are impaired.

So, put some of these steps in place and help keep family, friends, and loved ones safe when celebrating this holiday season. Remember, if you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, call 911 right away!

- For more information about drinking and driving, visit the Centers for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety](http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety) or email [avalosj@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:avalosj@co.thurston.wa.us)

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Dr. Diana Yu is the Health Officer for the  
Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department  
[www.co.thurston.wa.us/health](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health)  
360-867-2500