

A Safer Naper --- Summer Celebration Safety

The Naperville Police Department is focusing this month's A Safer Naper campaign on summer celebration safety, particularly as it relates to drinking alcohol. From weddings and graduations to outdoor barbeques, June is a time filled with social events that often involve the consumption of alcohol.

We want to encourage all Naperville residents to celebrate summer responsibly! By educating Naperville residents on the impact alcohol has on your body and reflexes, we hope to encourage residents of all ages to make good choices this summer and refrain from dangerous (and potentially deadly) behaviors.

SECTION 1: DRINKING AND DRIVING

Alcohol is a substance that reduces the function of the brain, impairing thinking, reasoning and muscle coordination. That is why it is illegal in all 50 states to drive with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at or above .08 per 100 milliliters of blood or 240 liters of breath.

Driving with alcohol in your system can be a fatal choice. According to the National Highway Safety Administration, there were 10,874 people killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes in 2017. That's an average of one alcohol-impaired-driving fatality every 48 minutes. These alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities accounted for 29 percent of all motor vehicle traffic fatalities in the United States in 2017.

What affects your BAC?

Blood-alcohol concentration is a measurement of the amount of alcohol in your system based on a test of your breath, blood or urine. It is illegal to drive if your BAC is .08 percent or more. However, you can be convicted of Driving Under the Influence (DUI) if your BAC is less than .08 percent and your driving ability is impaired. Your BAC can be affected by:

- **The number of drinks.** The more you drink, the higher the BAC. Your BAC will be higher if you consume more of a drink containing stronger alcohol content. A 12-ounce can or bottle of beer, for instance, has the same amount of alcohol as 5-ounce glass of wine or 1.5 ounces of hard liquor. The more alcohol you consume, the more alcohol will wind up in your bloodstream.
- **How fast you drink.** When alcohol is consumed quickly, you will reach a higher BAC than when it is consumed over a longer period of time.
- **Your gender.** Women generally have less water and more body fat per pound of body weight than men. More alcohol remains in the blood of women.
- **Your weight.** The more you weigh, the more water is present in your body. This water dilutes the alcohol and lowers the BAC.
- **Food in your stomach.** The food you eat can also affect your BAC. Your BAC may be higher if you drank alcohol on an empty stomach compared to someone who has eaten before drinking.
- **Medications.** Many medications can negatively react with alcohol, including allergy pills, cold medicine and prescription drugs. Medications can intensify the effects of alcohol, and possibly even endanger a person's health.

How alcohol affects your driving skills

When alcohol is in your system, it affects how quickly you are able to respond to different situations. Drinking slows your response time, which can increase the likelihood of an accident. Drivers use their hands, eyes and feet

to control the car; but their hands, eyes and feet must be controlled by their brains. Safe driving requires being alert and able to make quick decisions in rapidly-changing situations. Drinking alcohol can have a profound effect on driving skills. For example, drinking can have a negative effect on any of these skills:

- **Reaction time.** Alcohol can slow reflexes, which can decrease the ability to react swiftly to changing situations.
- **Vision.** Alcohol can slow eye muscle function, alter eye movement and impact visual perception, possibly resulting in blurred vision. Night vision and color perception also can be impaired.
- **Tracking.** Alcohol can decrease the ability to judge the car's position on the road or the location of other vehicles, the center line or road signs.
- **Concentration.** Alcohol may cause attention to driving to decrease and/or drowsiness to occur.
- **Comprehension.** Alcohol can hinder the ability to make rational decisions.
- **Coordination.** Reduced eye/hand/foot coordination can be caused by drinking too much alcohol.

SECTION 2: UNDERAGE DRINKING

Consumption of alcohol by a minor

Illinois law prohibits the consumption of alcoholic liquor by any person under 21 years of age except under the direct supervision and approval of the person's parent(s) in the privacy of a home or during a religious ceremony.

According to research compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [link: <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/minimum-legal-drinking-age.htm>], drinking by those below the age of 21 is strongly linked with

- Death from alcohol poisoning.
- Unintentional injuries such as car crashes, falls, burns and drowning.
- Suicide and violence, such as fighting and sexual assault.
- Changes in brain development.
- School performance problems, such as higher absenteeism and poor or failing grades.
- Alcohol dependence later in life.
- Other risk behaviors such as smoking, abuse of other drugs and risky sexual behaviors.

Excessive drinking also contributes to more than 4,300 deaths among people below the age of 21 in the United States each year, according to the CDC.

Zero tolerance

Under Illinois' Zero Tolerance Law, it is illegal for any driver under the age of 21 to have any trace of alcohol in his/her system. Violating this law means the loss of that person's driving privileges.

If convicted of DUI, a driver under the age of 21 faces the revocation of their driving privileges for a minimum of two years for a first conviction.

Fake IDs

Here's the bottom line on Fake ID's, according to the Illinois Liquor Control Commission: IT IS ILLEGAL to assist in obtaining or to fraudulently obtain, distribute, use or possess a fraudulent state ID card/driver's license. Your driving privileges can be suspended for up to one year or revoked for a minimum of one year.

RELATED LINKS

Why teens choose to be alcohol free – <https://www.youtube.com/embed/V4zJSGnEazo>

The greatest influence on a young person's decision is the world they live in, which includes their families, friends, schools, and community. Find out how these influences play a role in a young person's decision to be alcohol free.

Illinois 2019 DUI Fact Book - https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf_publications/dsd_a118.pdf

Under 21 – The Bottom Line on Fake ID's (PDF) -

<https://www2.illinois.gov/ilcc/All%20documents%20site%20wide/Education/Under%2021/Consequences/FakeID.pdf>

The Power of Choice – A Practical Guide for Parents (PDF) -

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b5e100bf407b4df95b698ef/t/5cc1bf84e5e5f0f36f16e983/1556201349984/REVISED-Guidelines+for+Parties+and+the+Law+2019-FINAL+VERSION.pdf>