

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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Contact: Rob Marus, Communications Director: 202.724.5646; robert.marus@dc.gov

Attorney General Racine Reminds the District's Drivers to Abide by Impaired-Driving Laws This Summer

WASHINGTON, D. C. – As summer celebrations, cookouts and vacations kick into high gear, Attorney General Karl A. Racine is reminding District residents to be mindful of road safety – and particularly in regard to impaired driving. In conjunction with the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) and the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, the Office of the Attorney General is reminding District residents to put safety first during one of the worst times of year for drunk driving and traffic-related deaths.

“Ensuring the safety and well-being of District residents is one of our top priorities, and I want all drivers, cyclists and pedestrians to be safe and aware this summer,” said Attorney General Racine. **“As defenders of the law, it is our job to make sure all citizens are aware of the consequences of impaired driving and that those who endanger themselves and others are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”**

Before getting behind the wheel in an impaired state, consider these statistics:

- According to the National Highway Safety Traffic Administration, June and August were the two most dangerous months on the road in 2013.
- Impaired-driving fatalities accounted for 43 percent of the total traffic fatalities in the United States in 2013, with fatal traffic crashes occurring more frequently in August than any other time of year.
- In 2013, almost 40 percent of all traffic fatalities over the Fourth of July holiday period occurred in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes.
- From 2009-2013, *Forbes* magazine named the Independence Day holiday “the most dangerous holiday of the year.”
- Automobile accidents are the number-one cause of death for people between the ages of 1 and 34.

WRAP SoberRide Program

On Independence Day this year, WRAP is offering their SoberRide program – offering free taxi rides for fares of up to \$30 for drivers who have had too much to drink. The rides are available from 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 4 to 4:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 5, by calling 1-800-200-TAXI (1-800-200-8294). In order to use this service, participants must be 21 years of age or older.

For more information about SoberRide and their services, visit: <http://www.wrap.org/soberride/index.htm>

Impaired-Driving Penalties in the District

The maximum penalty for the first offense of driving under the influence is 180 days in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine, and the maximum penalty for the first offense of operating a vehicle while impaired is 90 days in jail and/or a \$500 fine. Other factors, however, can trigger larger penalties and jail terms:

- If the defendant has a prior conviction;
- If the defendant has a blood-alcohol content over a certain threshold;
- If certain drugs are present in the defendant's system;
- Or if there are children in the vehicle.

Tips for Avoiding Impaired Driving

Attorney General Racine recommends these simple tips to prevent drunk driving:

- Plan a safe way home *before* the fun begins.
- Before drinking, designate a sober driver.
- If you're impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation.
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don't hesitate to call 911.
- If you are with a friend who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where he or she is going safely.

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