



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Designated Driver

What is "Designated Driver?"



The principle is simple; one individual refrains from drinking alcoholic beverages to assure the safe transportation home of the remaining guests.

At the next party, another person volunteers and the responsibility is rotated. In Sweden and the United Kingdom, where the practice originated, designated drivers place their car keys in their empty beverage glasses so they are not served.

Social drinkers, as well as alcoholics, are a menace behind the wheel. Young drivers between the ages of 16 and 24 are involved in more than one-third of all alcohol-related traffic accident. These "social drinkers" are unable to drive responsibly because judgment is impaired, reaction time is slowed and coordination is reduced. No one can drive skillfully and safely after consuming alcoholic beverages.

How Does Alcohol Impair?

Alcohol is a depressant - not a stimulant. It acts as an anesthetic to lower or depress the activity of the brain.

Alcohol is not digested, it is absorbed directly into the bloodstream. Since the brain has a high degree of blood, it is affected quickly. The blood alcohol concentration, or BAC, creates the impairment of judgment and physical coordination. A person's BAC depends on:

- The number and strength of the drinks
- The time span of when the drinking began
- The individual's body weight
- The physical and mental condition of the individual
- The amount and kind of food eaten
- The possibility of other drugs being present in the body

How Can You Identify a Drunken Driver?

By learning to spot the following warning signs of an impaired driver, the chances of becoming involved in an alcohol-related motor vehicle accident are reduced:

- Unusually wide turns
- Straddling the center line or lane marker
- Driving with one's head out of the window or with the window down in cold weather
- Nearly striking an object or another vehicle
- Weaving or swerving
- Driving on other than the designated roadway
- Stopping with no apparent cause
- Following too closely
- Responding slowly to traffic signals
- Abrupt or illegal turns
- Rapid acceleration or deceleration
- Driving with headlights off at night