



Chapter 15

Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Driving

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Effects of Alcohol on Driving Safely

Objectives

1. Explain how alcohol affects mental and physical abilities needed for driving.
2. Define blood-alcohol concentration.
3. Explain factors that affect blood-alcohol concentration.
4. List five myths and truths about the use of alcohol.

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug in our society today. It is by far the most frequently found drug in fatally injured drivers.

Young people in their teens are among those in our society who use and abuse alcohol. Even though it is illegal for teens to drink, a significant percentage of them do drink. This segment of young people who drink alcohol presents a major problem for highway safety when they mix drinking with driving.

All states now enforce a minimum drinking age of 21. Laws against underage drinking and driving are more strictly and more vigorously enforced now than ever. Alcohol-related educational programs within schools, homes, and communities have increased. Nevertheless, alcohol-related collisions are still a major safety problem.

Alcohol Facts

Some people are not aware that alcohol is a drug. After all, it can be purchased legally. And commercial advertising depicts alcoholic beverage consumption as harmless fun.

The word *alcohol* is the commonly used term for the chemical substance ethanol, grain alcohol, or ethyl alcohol. Alcohol is the product of the fermentation of fruits, grains, or other plants. Alcohol is classified as a drug because of its effects on the body's central nervous system.

The effects of alcohol vary from person to person. However, everyone who uses alcohol is affected by it to some degree. One of the most serious problems of alcohol is the problem of the drinking driver. Drivers cannot afford to increase the risks of driving by having their abilities diminished by alcohol.



Alcohol is the most commonly found drug in fatally injured drivers.

Consider these facts about alcohol and driving:

- Young drinking drivers are involved in fatal crashes at twice the rate of drivers aged 21 and older.
- Drivers aged 16 through 20 are more likely to be alcohol-impaired than any other age group.
- Nearly half of those killed in alcohol-related collisions had not been drinking but were victims of drunk drivers.
- More than half of all fatalities during holidays are alcohol related.




How Alcohol Affects Behavior

As soon as alcohol from a drink reaches the brain, it affects the way people think and behave. Just one drink can affect a person's behavior, both mentally and physically, regardless of the type of alcoholic drink. The same amount of alcohol does not affect all people the same way. Alcohol does not even affect the same person in the same way in all situations. The best way to avoid changes in behavior is to abstain from drinking.

Mental Abilities and Alcohol

Alcohol acts on the central nervous system like an anesthetic, slowing the activity of the brain. Alcohol is not digested. It is absorbed directly and quickly into the bloodstream through the walls and linings of the entire digestive tract.

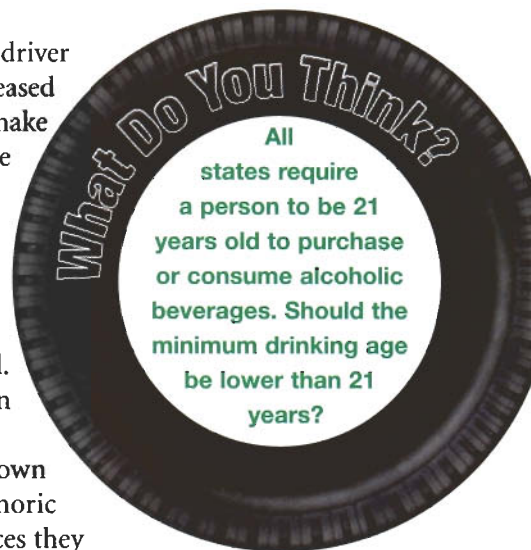
Once alcohol enters the bloodstream, it quickly flows to the brain. Alcohol has the greatest effect on the parts of the brain that control judgment and reasoning—the two

| Effects of Alcohol on Behavior | | |
|--|----------|--|
| Number of drinks in one hour | BAC | Effects |
| 1 serving  | .02–.03% | Inhibitions are lessened. Judgment and reasoning begin to be affected. |
| 3 servings  | .05–.09% | Unable to think clearly. Judgment and reasoning are not reliable. Muscular coordination is impaired. |
| 4 servings  | .10–.12% | After four drinks, hearing, speech, vision, and balance are affected. Most behaviors are affected. |

most critical mental skills needed by drivers. Physical abilities become impaired soon afterward.

Judgment and Reasoning A driver affected by alcohol has a decreased ability to reason clearly and make sound judgments. At the same time, the driver actually feels as though thinking and judging abilities are sharper, quicker, and more accurate than usual. In a way, alcohol puts sound judgment on hold.

A person in this condition can develop a false feeling of well-being. This feeling is known as **euphoria**. People in a euphoric state of mind may take chances they normally would not take. This behavior can be deadly when behind the wheel of a vehicle.



The IPDE Process is affected when judgment and reasoning abilities are reduced. An alcohol-impaired driver is less able to correctly interpret what he or she sees. Target areas may become unclear and scanning of zones may become erratic.

Because alcohol distorts vision, it reduces the effectiveness of the driver's orderly visual search pattern. A drinking driver's eyes are more likely to fixate in a stare, thus reducing the scanning and searching process. The driver is likely to look straight ahead or at any object that attracts attention. Staring usually results in the driver being unaware of vehicles to the sides as well as to the rear.

Inhibitions Alcohol weakens a person's **inhibitions**, the inner forces of personality that restrain or hold back one's impulsive behavior. As alcohol content in the body increases, a driver's inhibitions weaken. The person

might drive too fast, take needless risks, or even drive into emergency situations without knowing or caring.

Physical Abilities and Alcohol

As alcohol enters the bloodstream, the area of the brain that controls muscular movements, reflexes, and balance begins to slow down. The driver may recognize a dangerous situation, but the brain takes longer to process the information and react to the danger.

Reaction Time and Coordination

Alcohol slows reflexes and reaction time. Muscular coordination becomes slow and clumsy. A driver might oversteer, brake late, or accelerate suddenly. Alcohol especially affects the reflexes and reactions of beginning drivers.

Seeing and Speaking Abilities One of the most dangerous effects of alcohol is impaired vision. Impairment occurs in visual acuity, peripheral vision, night vision, color vision, and depth perception. Impaired vision combined with diminished judgment and slow reaction time can cause a driver who has been drinking to be in a conflict. For example, the driver in the picture might not identify the pedestrian in time to stop safely.

After only a few alcoholic drinks, the driver's visual acuity can become impaired. A person's ability to focus becomes fuzzy and unclear.

Alcohol also affects the reflex action of the eyes. At night, this impairment can be critical. As headlights of oncoming vehicles come



A driver who has been drinking would have difficulty seeing this pedestrian and reacting soon enough to stop.

closer, the pupils of the eyes normally become smaller to shut out excess light. This reflex keeps you from being blinded by the glare of the headlights. When the lights have passed, the pupils enlarge again to let in all available light. The ability of your eyes to make this change is extremely important.

After only a few drinks, this reflex action is impaired. The pupils do not become small rapidly as the bright lights approach, and they are slow to open after the bright lights pass. As a result, the driver can be blinded temporarily and may continue to have blurred vision for some time after meeting each vehicle.

After excessive drinking, a person might see multiple images. Each eye normally picks up a separate image of an object. These two images are coordinated by the brain so that the person sees only one image. After several drinks, however, coordination of the images becomes impaired. When driving, the person might see numerous images of a roadway center line, or of traffic signs, as the picture shows.

Alcohol also impairs depth perception. The drinking driver may misjudge the distance of oncoming or cross-traffic vehicles. A vehicle is perceived as being farther away than it actually is. In addition, drinking drivers cannot accurately determine the speed or distance of approaching vehicles. These drivers even lose the ability to judge their own speed or the distance they need for stopping.

Peripheral vision also is impaired by alcohol. When peripheral vision is



After several drinks, a driver may see multiple images of roadway signs.










narrowed, the driver must turn and look to the sides for potential problems. However, these drivers are usually not aware of this impairment so they do not make the effort to turn and look to the sides for potential conflicts. They often become a hazard themselves.

Alcohol also can affect a person's speech. The speech pattern may become slurred and fuzzy, and spoken sentences may fail to convey meaning. With the lack of inhibitions, and with the feelings of euphoria, the drinking person often becomes more and more talkative with language that becomes less and less meaningful.

Other Physical Problems

As a person continues to drink, the center of the brain that controls breathing and heartbeat can become impaired. Death can occur if a large amount of alcohol is consumed over a short period of time. Usually, a person becomes unconscious and stops drinking before this point.

Amount of Alcohol in Standard Drinks

| Drink volume | Percentage of alcohol | Amount of alcohol |
|--|---|--|
|  12 ounces beer |  5% |  .60 ounces |
|  5 ounces wine |  12% |  .60 ounces |
|  1½ ounces whiskey (80 proof) |  40% |  .60 ounces |

Long-Term Effects Long-term use of alcohol can lead to alcoholism, an addiction to alcohol. Alcoholism is a major problem in our society today. It has far-reaching effects, not only for the problem drinker, but for families and communities as well.

Alcohol in the Body

The percentage of alcohol in a person's bloodstream can be determined by chemical tests. The amount of alcohol in the blood is called **blood-alcohol concentration (BAC)**.

The level of intoxication is determined by the percent of alcohol in the bloodstream. Each drink adds about 0.02 to 0.03 percent to the person's BAC. The greater the BAC, the more dangerous driving becomes.

Amount of Alcohol in a Drink

Beer, wine, and liquor can all be thought of as "drinks." In standard sizes, drinks all have about the same amount of alcohol, as the chart shows.

The term "proof" describes the strength of liquor. Divide a liquor's

proof number by two to determine its approximate percentage of alcohol. The chart shows that 80-proof whiskey is about 40 percent alcohol. A 100-proof liquor is about 50 percent alcohol.

Factors Affecting BAC The percentage of alcohol in the bloodstream depends on the following factors:

- **Amount of alcohol consumed**
The more a person drinks, the higher the BAC.
- **Amount of time over which a given amount of alcohol is consumed**
A person's BAC rises more rapidly if only short periods of time elapse between drinks.
- **Person's body weight**
If other factors are equal, a heavier person may be affected less by the same amount of alcohol than a lighter person would be.

To a lesser degree, some types of food in the stomach may make a difference in the rate the alcohol is absorbed. However, even with food in the stomach, the absorption rate of alcohol into the bloodstream is



SAFE DRIVING

The seriousness as well as the number of collisions increases as the BAC increases.

The Time It Takes for the Body to Rid Itself of Alcohol*

| Number of Drinks | BAC Range | Approximate Time to Eliminate Alcohol |
|---|-----------|---------------------------------------|
|  | .02–.03 | 1½ hours |
|  | .04–.06 | 3 hours |
|  | .06–.09 | 4 to 5 hours |
|  | .08–.12 | 5 to 7 hours |

*The number will vary depending on the alcohol content of the drinks and rate of consumption.

rapid. When alcohol is mixed with carbonated beverages, the rate of absorption is even faster.

The safest decision a person can make about alcoholic beverages is the decision to abstain from drinking. At a social gathering, a person can choose a soft drink, set down an alcoholic drink and walk away from it, or say *no*.

Some people may decide they want to drink. Responsible friends can encourage them to limit their drinking by taking the following actions:

- Get them involved in other activities.
- Encourage them to decide on a limit of drinks in advance and stick to it.
- Ask them to avoid drinks with a high concentration of alcohol.
- Encourage them to sip a drink slowly. Suggest that they not drink more than one alcoholic beverage in an hour.

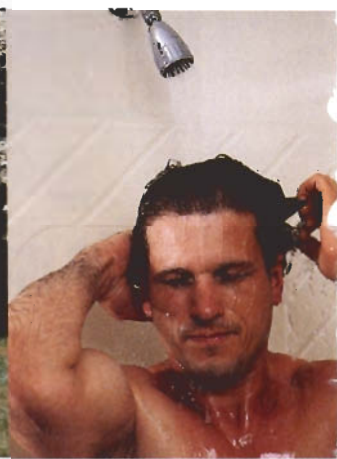
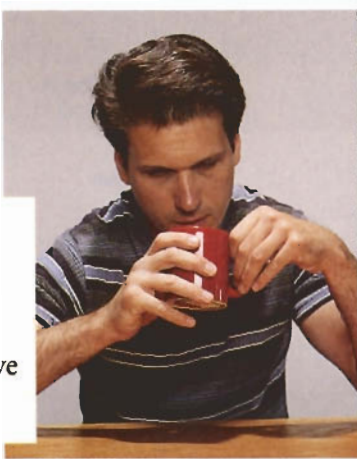
- Make them aware of their mental and physical behavior.

Controlling Impairment Alcohol is absorbed into the brain and the rest of the body very quickly, but it is very slow to leave. Alcohol continues to circulate throughout the body until it is oxidized and removed by the liver. The body rids itself of alcohol at a rate of about three-fourths of a standard drink an hour.

A person who has one drink needs about one and a half hours to rid the body of the alcohol in that drink. After consuming three drinks in an hour, a person needs more than four hours to oxidize and eliminate most of the alcohol. A person should not drive during those time periods. *Only time can reduce the body's BAC and that person's degree of impairment.* The chart shows the time needed for the body to rid itself of alcohol at the rate of about three-fourths of a drink in an hour.

You Are the Driver!

This man has had several drinks at a party. Which activity would lower his BAC so that he could drive home?



Myths and Truths About Alcohol

The following ideas about alcohol are *not* true. They are only myths.

- **I can sober up by drinking black coffee, taking a cold shower, or doing exercises.** The truth is that these activities do not reduce the BAC. The person may seem more alert, but the BAC is not reduced.
- **One little drink won't hurt me.** The truth is that taking one drink can make it easier to take the second and third drinks.
- **I will not be affected because I am only drinking beer.** The truth is that a 12-ounce can of beer contains as much alcohol as an average cocktail.
- **I can drive better after a few drinks.** The truth is that your driving abilities are diminished, not improved.
- **A young person cannot become a problem drinker.** The truth is that some young people become problem drinkers even as teens.

Reducing Driving Risk

As a responsible driver, you can help reduce the risk of drinking and driving. Always refuse to ride with drivers who have been drinking. Make every effort to keep others from driving when they have been drinking.

One way to reduce the risk involved with drinking and driving is to appoint a person to be the **designated driver**. That person decides ahead of time not to drink.

Review It

1. How does alcohol affect mental and physical abilities needed for driving?
2. What is meant by blood-alcohol concentration?
3. Describe factors that affect blood-alcohol concentration.
4. What are three myths about alcohol, and what is the truth about each myth?

Besides alcohol, there are many other types of drugs that are both legal and illegal. When used properly, most legal drugs have a positive effect. However, even medicines designed for good can cause hazardous driving situations.

Types of Drugs

Most drugs are classified according to the effects they have on the central nervous system and bodily functions. Some drugs depress, or slow down, the central nervous system. Others stimulate it, or speed it up.

When legal drugs are taken in the prescribed amounts and for the right reasons, they are relatively safe.

However, any drug can become dangerous if it is taken in excess, combined with other drugs, or otherwise misused or abused.

Over-the-Counter Medicines

Drugs that can be obtained legally without a doctor's prescription are called **over-the-counter medicines**, or OTCs. Many over-the-counter medicines have side effects that can include drowsiness, dizziness, slowed reaction time, and poor judgment.

When buying any medicine, check the label for warnings of how it might affect driving performance. Check with the pharmacist, as the person in the picture is doing, if you are not sure of the labeling or of the possible side effects.

Prescription Medicines

A drug that can be purchased legally only when ordered by a doctor is called a **prescription medicine**. The law requires a prescription because the drug used can have very strong effects on the body.

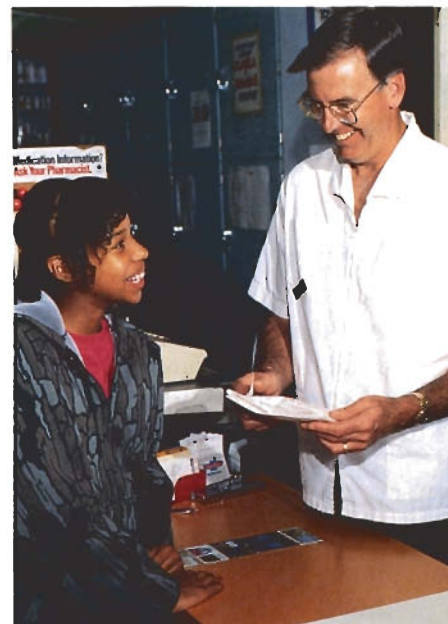
Depressants

A **depressant** is a drug that can slow down, or depress, the central nervous system. Depressants such as barbiturates, sleeping pills, and tranquilizers are used to relieve tension, calm nerves, and treat high blood pressure.

A driver using depressants can become very relaxed, lose inhibitions, and have difficulty identifying,

Objectives

1. Explain the difference between the purchase of over-the-counter medicine and the purchase of prescription medicine.
2. Explain how depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogenic drugs can affect a driver.
3. Describe the effects of combining alcohol with other drugs.



Learn about the side effects of a medicine by checking with the pharmacist.



DRIVE RIGHT
DID YOU KNOW?

MARIJUANA Chemicals in marijuana can remain in the body for weeks. Drivers can be given a test for drugs and can be issued a violation ticket if any trace of marijuana is found in the body. Traces of marijuana can be detected in the bloodstream even weeks after the person uses the drug.

predicting, deciding, and executing. Alcohol also is a depressant.

Stimulants

A **stimulant** is a drug that can speed up, or stimulate, the central nervous system. Amphetamines are a type of stimulant. When first taken, the user gets a feeling of high energy and alertness. Some people misuse these drugs to try to stay awake while driving long distances. However, the feeling of alertness soon wears off and the person becomes very tired very quickly, thus increasing driver-related risk.

Hallucinogens

Hallucinogens are unpredictable mind-altering drugs that can alter personality and cause panic or terror as they distort a person's sense of direction, distance, and time.

Marijuana Marijuana is a powerful mind-altering drug that affects the brain and other parts of the central nervous system. Marijuana can impair judgment, memory, depth perception, and coordination.

A marijuana user might feel that the effects have worn off, and it is safe to drive after a few hours. In reality, driving abilities remain impaired for a very long time.

Combining Drugs

You should not take more than one over-the-counter or prescription medicine without first consulting your doctor or a pharmacist.

Using alcohol while taking medicine is especially dangerous. If a person uses alcohol while taking an antihistamine for a cold, the nervous system can be slowed down much more than by using either drug alone. When other drugs are combined with alcohol, the effects of both drugs can be multiplied, rather than just added together. This is known as a synergistic effect.

Drug-alcohol combinations increase driving risks. Driving a vehicle after taking certain medications and drinking alcohol is neither wise nor legal.

Review It

1. How does the purchase of over-the-counter medicine differ from the purchase of prescription medicine?
2. How do depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogenic drugs affect a driver?
3. **What is** the effect of combining alcohol with other drugs?

Traffic Laws Governing the Use of Alcohol

All 50 states have become uniform in requiring a person to be 21 years of age to purchase or consume alcoholic beverages.

Alcohol-related vehicle collisions among teenagers dropped after states raised the drinking age to 21. Young drivers are less likely than adults to drive after drinking. However, the risk of collision is substantially higher when teenagers do drive after drinking.

Implied-Consent Law

Every state has an **implied-consent law** for drivers. Implied consent means that anyone who receives a driver's license automatically consents to be tested for BAC and other drugs if stopped for suspicion of drug use while driving.

If the driver does not cooperate with the officer and refuses to be tested for BAC, that driver's license can be suspended.

Levels of Intoxication

Because there is no "safe" amount of alcohol for drivers, all states have set a BAC level at which drivers could be charged with **driving while intoxicated (DWI)**. In the past, that level in many states was set at 0.10 percent. Research now shows that the vast majority of drinking drivers are significantly impaired at 0.08 percent. The impairment primarily affects judgment and such critical driving tasks as braking, steering, and changing lanes.

In an effort to further reduce alcohol-related collisions, many states have set the BAC level for driving while intoxicated at 0.08 percent, as the picture shows.

In many states, a charge of **driving under the influence (DUI)** can be made if the driver's BAC is 0.05 or more. Other states make no distinction between DWI and DUI.

Penalties for Conviction

The penalties for conviction of driving while intoxicated and driving under the influence involve one or more of the following:

- suspension or revocation of driver's license
- payment of a fine
- serving a prison term

The most common penalty is suspension of the driver's license for a specified period of time.



Some states post the BAC level for intoxication on highways.

Objectives

1. Explain what is meant by the implied-consent law.
2. Describe zero-tolerance levels of intoxication, and tell how these levels can be measured.
3. Explain what a driver should do when stopped by a police officer.

Penalties are more severe if an intoxicated driver is involved in a collision. If a fatality results from the collision, the driver could be found guilty of manslaughter or even murder.

Drivers who are convicted of a second DWI or DUI offense usually receive much harsher penalties than for the first conviction. Licenses can be revoked for as long as three years. Prison terms can be longer and fines more costly.

Zero-Tolerance Law A **zero-tolerance law** makes it illegal for persons under the age of 21 to drive with any measurable amount of alcohol in the blood. Almost all states have implemented zero-tolerance BAC levels for drivers under the age of 21. States with a graduated-licensing system usually have a zero-tolerance law. Most states have set the zero-tolerance BAC at 0.00 to 0.01 percent. Some states use a 0.01 or 0.02 BAC to define zero tolerance to allow for

variations in alcohol testing instruments.

A National Highways Systems Designation Act requires states to set a 0.02 BAC (or less) for drivers under the age of 21. A young driver with 0.02 BAC or less is considered driving while intoxicated. States that do not comply with this act are subject to the withholding of federal highway funds.

Tests for Intoxication

Law enforcement agencies place a high priority on enforcing DUI and DWI laws. Several tests can be used to evaluate a person suspected of DUI or DWI. Tests can be given in the police station or on the roadside.

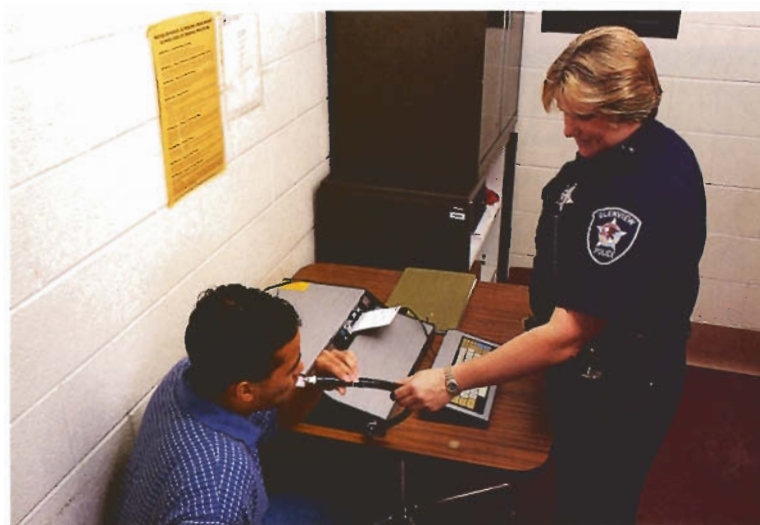
Chemical Testing

Chemical analysis of blood, urine, or breath can accurately determine BAC. The breath test is a widely used and simple analysis.

The breath-test machine most commonly used for determining BAC is an **intoxilyzer**. The person breathes into the intoxilyzer tube, as the man in the picture is doing. The intoxilyzer determines the BAC, which is then indicated on both the intoxilyzer screen and on a paper printout.

Field Sobriety Testing

Law officers in many states can give a **field sobriety test** when they suspect a driver of DUI or DWI. Field sobriety testing includes a series of on-the-spot, roadside tests that help an officer detect driver impairment. A variety of coordination tests and eye checks might be used.



The intoxilyzer can show the person's BAC level.

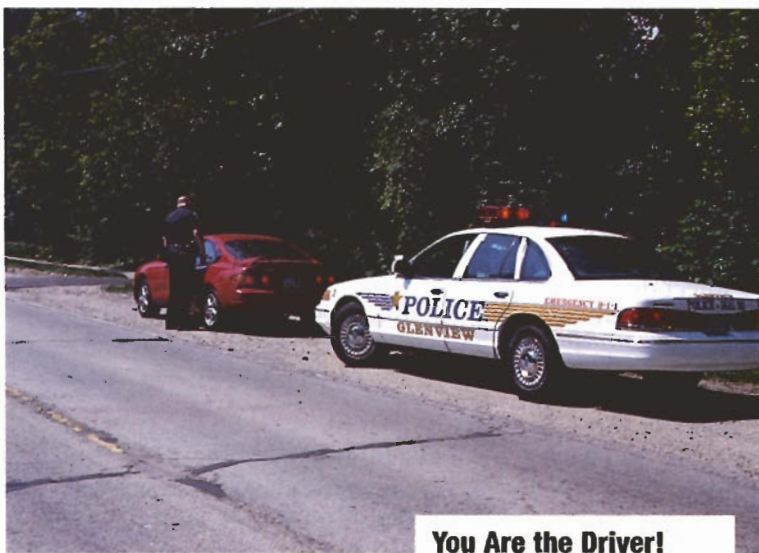
One such test is the horizontal-gaze nystagmus test. The term **nystagmus** refers to the involuntary jerking of the eyes as the person gazes to the side. Most people show some nystagmus as their eyes track from straight ahead to the side. This test determines the point where the jerking begins. As the BAC increases, the jerking begins at an earlier point. Trained officers can estimate a person's BAC that will be accurate to within 0.02 percent of chemical test readings.

Other roadside tests demonstrate both physical and mental impairment. Balance, coordination, the ability to follow simple instructions, and the ability to perform two tasks at once may be tested. The inability to perform two tasks at once is called *divided-attention impairment*.

A simple divided-attention test might require the driver to walk heel to toe a certain number of steps, while at the same time giving an oral count of the number of steps taken. This procedure not only tests the person's ability to follow a set of instructions, but also tests both balance and counting abilities.

If You Are Stopped by a Police Officer

When a driver sees the flashing lights of a police vehicle in the rearview mirrors, it is usually a signal to pull over and stop. If you see such a signal, slow your vehicle until you are sure the officer is signaling for you. Pull over to the right and stop in a safe place, as the driver in the picture is doing. You might need to pull into a parking lot or a side street to be



You Are the Driver!

What tests might you be required to take if the police officer suspects alcohol or drug impairment?

out of the way of moving traffic. Keep your hands visible as the officer approaches.

Stay in your vehicle and follow the instructions the officer gives you. You will be required to show your driver's license, and in states with mandatory insurance laws, you will need to show your certificate of insurance.

Review It

1. What is the implied-consent law for drivers?
2. What are zero-tolerance levels for intoxication, and how can they be measured?
3. What must a driver do when stopped by a police officer?

15.4

Coping with Peer Pressure

Objectives

1. Tell how peer pressure might affect one's decision about drinking and driving.
2. List five steps involved in making a responsible decision.
3. Explain what is meant by peer education.
4. Explain why everyone should share the responsibility of preventing friends from drinking and driving.

Many factors and influences have an impact on young people's decisions about how they want to live their lives. Pressure from other individuals and groups can cause conflicts or unsure feelings about decisions they will need to make.

Understanding Peer Pressure

The influence of others of a similar age is called **peer pressure**. Peers greatly influence each other because people naturally tend to want to belong to a group. Some of the strongest influences in a person's life are the attitudes and actions of friends and peers. Peer relationships are very powerful forces in shaping a person's future. Many decisions are made based on positive peer pressure or negative peer pressure.

Positive Peer Pressure

When peers exert a pressure on you in a positive way, they want to be helpful and encouraging. The students in the picture are demonstrating positive peer pressure as they cheer for their team to win the track meet.

Talking a friend out of drinking alcoholic beverages at a party or refusing to ride with someone who has been drinking are other examples of positive peer pressure. Exerting positive peer pressure on friends also can help strengthen positive decisions in young people, as they search for their own identity and struggle to fit in.

Negative Peer Pressure

Negative peer pressure occurs when others encourage you to do something that you believe is wrong or danger-



Cheering for friends to win a race is an example of positive peer pressure.

Steps for Making Responsible Decisions

1. Know when a decision is needed.

2. Consider the choices.

3. Consider the consequences and ask yourself these questions:

- Is it legal?
- Is it safe?
- What would my parents and other family members think?
- Does it show respect for myself and others?

4. Decide which choice is best.

5. Evaluate your decision to know if it was a responsible decision.

ous. When peers exert negative pressure, they do not have your best interests in mind. Because some people worry a great deal about what others think of them, negative pressure might result in them doing things that are against their beliefs and values. People who tell others that they can drive safely after drinking are exerting negative peer pressure.

Some people might also submit to indirect peer pressure. This type of pressure often occurs when a person *feels* pressure to use alcohol or other drugs just to fit in with the group.

Refusing to do things that you believe to be wrong and being able to say no without fear of losing friends indicates responsible behavior. Mature, independent thinking is especially important if you face peer pressure to use alcohol or other drugs when you will be driving.

Making Responsible Decisions

Learning how to make responsible decisions can help you be more in

control of your life. Following the five steps listed in the decision-making chart will help you make responsible decisions.

Deciding About Drinking Each person must make his or her own decision whether or not to drink. The best decision a person can make is not to drink. Individuals who decide not to drink alcoholic beverages never need to worry about alcohol impairing their driving performance. However, nondrinkers must share general concern and care about people who do drink and then drive.

Peer Education

Underage drinking is a national problem with many causes and no simple solutions. Many schools have organized student programs for **peer education**. Peer education is a process in which young people help other young people make decisions and determine goals. Peer programs may be known by many other names, including peer counseling, peer men-



Peer leaders direct activities such as the “trust fall” to help others to develop trust.

toring, or peer helpers. Regardless of the name, the purposes and goals of such programs are the same.

Peer education programs help young people influence one another in a positive way. Many young people are more sensitive to the thoughts and opinions of their peers than to the thoughts and opinions of adults. Peer groups have properly trained peer leaders who can be more than a friend or a considerate listener. Peer leaders learn specific skills for helping others deal effectively with problems through activities that develop cooperation, trust, support, and confidence. The students in the picture are participating in such an activity.

Teachers, counselors, and other professionals supervise training of peer leaders. Peer leaders learn communication skills, referral skills, and problem-solving skills.

Actions You Can Take

The following activities can help peer groups get involved in school and community programs to help combat the underage drinking problem:

- Investigate the facts through local health departments, law enforcement officials, community recreation directors, doctors, and other youth.
- Get the word out. Work with your school to create and distribute flyers and newsletters about your program. Contact other community leaders and solicit their cooperation.
- Communicate your support of zero-tolerance laws to your governor, state legislature, and community officials.
- Work with local park district and summer recreation officials to expand summer recreation programs.

Many schools have developed programs, through the assistance of other organizations, to help influence people about the harmful effects of alcohol, as well as the problem of drinking and driving. Some of these organizations include Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD), Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM), and Students Against Dangerous Decisions (SADD). Another program, sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, is a court program—Peer Justice and Youth Empowerment (PJYE). Teen drinking prevention plans can be implemented with the help of The United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Responsibility to Others

When people are in situations where alcoholic drinks are served, their first responsibility is for their own actions. However, a person's responsibility increases when the situation involves drinking and driving.

To what extent should a person take responsibility for the actions of others? Some people hesitate to interfere in other people's lives. However, most people wisely realize that they are being caring friends when they prevent friends from driving after drinking. Just as the sign says, *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*.

The drinker has the responsibility of not driving after drinking. However, everyone should accept the responsibility of trying to keep a drinker from driving. In some states, a person who serves alcohol is legally responsible if someone is injured or killed as a result of the actions of the



drinking driver. A responsible host plans a party where no alcoholic beverages are served.

You must be able to recognize the signs of too much drinking in order to share the responsibility of friends who drink. If friends are drinking, look for these signs of impairment:

- walking unsteadily or stumbling
- demonstrating poor judgment in behavior
- slurred, unclear speech
- talking loudly
- losing track of time or day of week

Remember that peer pressure is a forceful reason for people to drink or not to drink. Some people will think that drinking helps them to be accepted by a certain group.

Problems can come into being when a person drinks as a part of a group. Group drinking can become competitive and one may be urged to drink to keep up.

Don't forget that only one drink can cause a person's BAC to reach 0.03 percent. Driving abilities can be impaired even at that BAC. The risk of collision increases greatly as drinking increases.



What You and Others Can Do

A nondrinker has decisions to make about keeping drinking friends from driving. A friend will help get a drinking friend home safely.

A nondrinker might also have to decide whether or not to ride with a drinking driver. There is only one safe decision. Find other transportation to get home safely. Stay overnight where you are, if necessary.

When friends plan parties, encourage them to refrain from serving alcoholic beverages. Also encourage them to invite nondrinkers. If you know that some people will bring alcoholic drinks, consider not attending the party.

The effects of alcohol can be very harmful, if not deadly, especially when operating a motor vehicle. Keeping unsafe drivers off the road is everyone's responsibility. Every driver has the additional responsibility of driving safely. Even though heavy drinkers are a major cause of alcohol-related injuries and fatalities, social drinkers share a great responsibility

for alcohol-related collisions. Responsible drivers decide not to become a part of the drinking problem. Instead, they contribute to its solution.

Review It

1. How might peer pressure affect one's decision about drinking and driving?
2. What five steps are involved in making a responsible decision?
3. What is meant by peer education?
4. Why should everyone share the responsibility of preventing friends from drinking and driving?

Reviewing Chapter Objectives

1. Effects of Alcohol on Driving Safely

1. How does alcohol affect mental and physical abilities needed for driving? (315–317)
2. What is blood-alcohol concentration? (318)
3. What factors affect blood-alcohol concentration and how do they work? (318)
4. What are five myths about the use of alcohol and what is the truth about each myth? (320)

2. Other Drugs and Driving

5. How do purchasing over-the-counter medicine and prescription medicine differ? (321)
6. How do depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogenic drugs affect a driver? (321–322)
7. What is the effect of combining alcohol with other drugs? (322)

3. Traffic Laws Governing the Use of Alcohol

8. What is the implied-consent law? (323)
9. What are zero-tolerance levels of intoxication and how can these levels be measured? (324)
10. What should a driver do when stopped by a police officer? (325)

4. Coping with Peer Pressure

11. How might peer pressure affect one's decision about drinking and driving? (326–327)
12. What are the five steps involved in making a responsible decision? (327)
13. What is peer education? (327–328)
14. Why should everyone share the responsibility of preventing friends from drinking and driving? (329–330)

Projects

Individuals

Investigate Find out as much information as you can about collisions that occurred in your state last year involving underage drivers who were drinking. Use this information to write a persuasive argument about why teenagers should not drink and drive.

Use Technology Research the technology used in your state to determine blood-alcohol concentration. Find out how this technology works. Also find out the levels at which adults can be charged with *driving while intoxicated* or *driving under the influence* in your state. Share your results with the class.

Groups

Lobby Write letters to state and community officials communicating your support of zero-tolerance laws. Each student should address the letter to a different official. Share the letters with your class.

Debate Divide the class into two groups and debate the pros and cons of setting the drinking age at 21. Make a list of all reasons cited. Have one member from each group summarize the reasons and report them to the class.

Chapter 15

Review

Chapter Test

Check Your Knowledge

Multiple Choice Copy the number of each sentence below on a sheet of paper. Choose the letter of the answer that best completes the statement or answers the question.

- All states enforce a minimum drinking age of
(a) 18. (b) 19. (c) 20. (d) 21.
- Which of the following type of drugs slows down the central nervous system?
(a) stimulant (c) depressant
(b) hallucinogen (d) none of the above
- The most common penalty for a first-time conviction of a DUI or DWI is
(a) driver's license suspension.
(b) prison term.
(c) payment of a fine.
(d) vehicle impoundment.
- What advice should you give a social drinker planning to drive?
(a) Don't drink on an empty stomach.
(b) Appoint a designated driver.
(c) Be extra careful if you drink and drive.
(d) Wait one hour after drinking before driving.

Completion Copy the number of each sentence below. After each number, write the word or words that complete the sentence correctly.

- The _____ law makes it illegal for persons under the age of 21 to drive with any measurable amount of alcohol in the blood.
- In the process of _____, young people help other young people make decisions.
- A person who decides ahead of time not to drink and is appointed to drive others who do drink is known as a _____.

Review Vocabulary

Copy the number of each definition in list A. Match the definition in list A with the term it defines in list B.

List A

- drug that can slow down the central nervous system
- drug that speeds up the central nervous system
- amount of alcohol in the blood expressed as a percentage of alcohol in the bloodstream
- drugs that can be obtained legally without a doctor's prescription
- inner forces of personality that restrain or hold back one's impulsive behavior
- involuntary jerking of the eyes as a person gazes to the side

List B

- over-the-counter medicines
- inhibitions
- stimulant
- depressant
- nystagmus
- blood-alcohol concentration

Think Critically

Write a paragraph to answer each question.

- Using the framework of the IPDE Process, describe how alcohol impairs your ability to drive.
- What strategies can you use to overcome negative peer pressure as it relates to drinking and driving?

Decision Making



1. This driver stopped for an hour on his way home from work. During that time he drank three beers. What effects might the beer have on the driver's abilities to drive safely?



2. This girl is about to purchase over-the-counter medicine to treat her cold. Why is it important that she read the label on the medicine bottle?



3. This driver has been stopped by police for suspicion of driving while intoxicated. What types of tests might he be requested to take? What can the tests detect and measure? What could happen if the driver refuses to take the tests?



4. These students are soliciting support from community officials in an effort to combat the problem of underage drinking in their community. What type of activities might the students and community leaders pursue in their endeavor?