



## Facts about Driving Under the Influence

- A fatal crash that involves a driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.01 or greater is considered an alcohol-**related** crash. A fatal crash that involves a driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 or greater is considered an alcohol-**impaired** crash.
- One in 10 reported crashes in Montana in 2008 were alcohol/drug-related.
- 4 out of 10 fatal crashes in Montana have alcohol/drugs involved.
- Alcohol/drug-related crashes tend to result in more severe injuries than do crashes with no impairment.
- Nearly one out of every 5 people injured in MT traffic crashes in 2008 were injured due to an alcohol/drug-related crash.
- Economic loss from alcohol-related crashes in Montana was over \$178 million during 2007.
- In the last 25 years, Montana has consistently had a higher percent of alcohol-related fatalities than the nation, except for 1996.
- 18 to 24 year old drivers have the highest rates of alcohol-related driving crashes in Montana.
- According to the Montana Department of Justice, 1<sup>st</sup> offense convictions for driving under the influence have been climbing steadily over the past seven years, from 4,038 in 2002 to 5,245 in 2008.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> offense convictions for DUI's for those under the age of 21 were 438 in 2003, and decreased to 343 in 2008.
- MT repeatedly ranks at the top among states for the highest number of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.
  - In 2007, Montana continued to have the highest alcohol-impaired fatality rate in the nation.
- Preliminary 2008 results show that 45.9% of all fatalities in Montana were alcohol related.
- According to the MT Dept. of Corrections, driving under the influence is one of the top ten felony offenses in MT.
- Montana Supreme Court ranks driving under the influence as one of the top ten traffic violations in the state with 8,320 DUI cases (includes 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> DUI) filed in 2007.
- Approximately 7,500 breath tests are administered annually in Montana with an average of 0.154 blood alcohol concentration (BAC).
  - On average 1,200 DUI blood samples are analyzed annually in Montana, yielding an average of 0.160 BAC...TWICE the legal limit.
  - 30% of all blood submitted in Montana contained drugs and/or alcohol.
- In 2008, 7,165 alcohol-related convictions were reported to the Montana driver licensing authority.
- In 2008, alcohol was involved in 4 of 10 fatal crashes with young drivers in Montana. *Note: This is the number of drivers under the age of 21 – there could be a few instances where the young driver had not been drinking, while another, older, driver involved in the crash had been drinking. However, most alcohol/ drug related crashes involve only one vehicle, which implies that most of these drivers were under the age of 21 and therefore of illegal drinking age.*
- Costs of a DUI in Montana:
  - Fines\*
    - 1<sup>st</sup> DUI: \$300 - \$1000
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> DUI: \$600 - \$1,000
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> DUI: \$1,000 - \$5,000.

*Fines and jail time double (up to one year maximum) if passengers under age 16 are in the vehicle at the time of the offense.*
  - Driver's license suspension
  - \$200 driver's license reinstatement fee
  - Attend alcohol information course
  - Chemical dependency evaluation
  - Alcohol/drug treatment
  - Jail time
  - Probation and parole
  - Employment consequences
  - Points on your driving record

- Each DUI accrues 10 points on your driving record.
- Altered career and travel options
- Increased insurance rates



## Facts about wearing your Seat Belt

- Regular seat belt use is the single most effective way to protect people and reduce fatalities in motor vehicle crashes.
- Not wearing your seat belt doubles your chances of being seriously hurt or killed in a crash.
- Seat belts and air bags are meant to work together. The presence of air bags in a vehicle doesn't mean seat belts are unnecessary.
- Seat belts protect the head and spinal cord from impacts inside the vehicle such as with the steering wheel and windshield.
- Buckling up on every trip – not just the long distance ones – can save your life.

### CHILDREN

- In 2008, young occupant (0-14) injuries continued to decline—a good indication of proper safety restraint use.
- Seat belts and safety restraint devices are especially important for children, but nationally four out of five child safety seats are installed incorrectly. Child safety seats, when properly installed, will prevent the child from being ejected from the vehicle or thrown around the inside of the vehicle during a crash.

### YOUNG ADULTS

- Injuries among Montana's least experienced drivers, the 15-19 year olds, are the highest – this group is one of the least likely to be safely buckled up.
- The Montana severe injury and fatality rates are highest among those ages 15-34, the age group with the lowest seat belt use rate.

### PICKUPS

- Pickups have a high fatality rate because occupants of pickups are less likely to wear seat belts and pickups and SUV's are more likely to roll over than passenger cars.
- Pickup fatalities have the lowest usage rate (19% use vs. 36.8% usage in passenger cars).
- In MT, from 2006-2008, 81% of those killed in a crash while riding in a pickup were not wearing seat belts.
- For light truck occupants, safety belts reduce the risk of death by 60% and moderate to critical injury by 65%.

### EJECTIONS

- In 2008, 174 vehicle occupants died in car crashes on Montana roads and **3 out of every 4** of these people were not buckled. In all likelihood, most, if not all of the 80 people who were killed because they were partially or completely ejected would be alive today if wearing a seat belt.
- 64% of unrestrained vehicle occupants in Montana were ejected from their vehicle and killed in 2008.
- Restraints prevent ejections. Ejected occupants are 4 times as likely to die and 14 times as likely to sustain spinal cord injuries.

### SEAT BELT USE & COST

- In 2008, 79.3% of occupants in vehicles used seat belts on all roads in Montana. Seat belt use is highest on Interstate highways and lowest on county roads and in-town.
- Crashes are expensive. According to a study done for Montana in 2008, caring for unbelted patients costs over \$36.7 million each year in direct inpatient health care costs. Uninsured or Medicaid covered unbelted occupants cost the state of Montana over \$14 million annually for the hospital care of their preventable injuries.
- The economic loss to Montana in 2007 was estimated to be \$662 million, which is an average of over \$690 for every citizen in Montana. The cost of traffic crashes is measured in wage loss, medical expense, insurance administration and property damage costs.