



Impaired Driving Prevention Month

Commanding Officer's Memo

In the 2013 Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment Annual Report, about four percent of Navy and Marine Corps respondents indicated they had driven after having too much to drink, while 21 percent of active duty Navy respondents and 29 percent of active duty Marine Corps respondents said they engaged in heavy drinking.¹ While four percent may not seem like a high number, no one should be driving when they've had too much to drink given the risks of accident, injury, and death.

In 2010, males aged 21 to 34 comprised 11 percent of the U.S. adult population, but were responsible for 32 percent of all instances of drinking and driving.² In addition, 85 percent of drinking and driving episodes took place when people reported binge drinking.² Medications can also cause similar effects to that of consuming alcohol, such as delayed response or drowsiness, so driving should be avoided when on these medications. The effects of a DUI or DWI from alcohol or drugs on a Sailor or Marine's career can be devastating both to that individual and to their unit.

What can leadership do?

1. **Have a plan.** Support environments and activities that promote responsible and legal drinking, especially where alcohol is served. Stress the importance of having a plan if one chooses to drink, whether that is a designated driver or a taxi. Deglamorize alcohol consumption and do not promote practices that encourage irresponsible alcohol use or drinking and driving.
2. **Model responsible drinking.** If you hold an event, make sure you have adequate non-alcoholic beverages available. Also, support those who make the choice not to drink.
3. **Create awareness for safe alcohol behavior.** Ensure alcohol awareness activities are incorporated, where appropriate, and have resources available for those struggling with unsafe alcohol use. Engage with offices and individuals who can keep you up-to-date on alcohol trends and emerging issues. Partner with organizations across your installation, including Drug and Alcohol Program Advisors (DAPAs), Alcohol and Drug Control Officers (ADCOs), your Safety Office, and support organizations.



References

- ¹ Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center. EpiData Center Department. Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment Annual Report, 2013. <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/general-tools-and-programs/HRA2013-annual-report.pdf>. Prepared 2014. Accessed November 2014.
- ² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Drinking and Driving: A Threat to Everyone. Vital Signs October 2011. <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/DrinkingAndDriving/> Updated 15 October 2013. Accessed November 2014.