



# Celebrate Safely this Holiday Season – Drink Responsibly

End of the year holidays are a cause for celebration. Office parties and family gatherings can, however, create environments and opportunities that increase the risk for Sailors and Marines to engage in unhealthy behaviors that impair driving, especially drinking and driving. Operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol can have real life consequences, particularly during the holidays when there are more drivers on the road, many of them heading to or from celebrations. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities increased from 9,943 in 2014 to 10,265 in 2015 (3.2 percent increase).<sup>1</sup> This accounted for 29 percent of the 2015 overall motor vehicle fatalities.<sup>1</sup> Even at levels below the legal limit (blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 g/dL or greater), alcohol can seriously impair judgment and coordination as well as slow reaction time. Celebrate safely this holiday season by being a sober driver and following the tips below.

## Celebrate Responsibly

Although the holidays are a time to celebrate, you should do so responsibly. Take the time to put a plan in place before the festivities begin, so you can enjoy time with friends and family.

- Determine your transportation home before you even leave your house.
  - Identify a non-drinking driver you will ride with before you start drinking.
  - Schedule a taxi or take public transportation. Have the phone number for the taxi already programmed into your phone to make it easy to locate after you've been drinking.
  - Stay with family or friends or reserve a hotel room.
  - If you drove, give your keys to a dependable friend at the beginning of the night.
- Know your alcohol limit and make a plan not to exceed it before drinking.<sup>2</sup>
  - Count and measure your drinks accurately using standard measurements.<sup>2</sup> Learn more in the [“Don't Get Wrecked” infographic](#).
  - Pace yourself, sip slowly, and ensure you drink no more than one standard drink per hour.<sup>2</sup>
  - Alternate alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic drinks.<sup>2</sup>
  - Eat before and during the evening to slow your body's absorption of alcohol.<sup>2</sup>
- Never get into a car with an impaired driver or allow your friends to drive drunk.



## Determine if You Have a Drinking Problem

Between the various workplace potlucks to multiple family get-togethers, it can be difficult to determine if you are a social drinker who occasionally has one too many drinks, or if you are someone with a drinking problem. If you agree with one or more of the statements below you may be abusing alcohol and it may be time to make a change.<sup>3</sup> Reducing your risks and consuming alcohol safely and responsibly is important.

- Drank more than you intended to
- Wanted or tried to cut down or stop drinking but couldn't
- Put yourself in risky situations while drinking such as driving, having unsafe sex, etc.
- Had to drink a lot more than you once did to get the effect you want
- Continued to drink even though you felt depressed, anxious, or you had a memory blackout
- Spent a lot of time drinking or recovering from the effects of drinking
- Continued to drink even though it was causing trouble with your family or friends
- Drinking interfered with your family, friends, job, or school
- Reduced participation or stopped activities that you previously enjoyed or were important to you so you could drink
- Found that you had withdrawal symptoms after the effects of alcohol wore off. Examples include trouble sleeping, shakiness, nausea, or racing heart.

## Get Help

If you or someone you know needs help:

- Talk to your Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor (DAPA) or Navy Drug and Alcohol Counselor
- Speak to your Commanding Officer, XO, OIC, CMDCM/COB, or Chaplain
- Reach out to DoD Medical Personnel
- Contact your Fleet and Family Support Center Counselor

## Additional Resources

For more information on drinking responsibly visit:

- [Navy Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention \(NADAP\)](#)
  - [Keep What You've Earned Campaign](#)



## NAVY AND MARINE CORPS PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER

PREVENTION AND PROTECTION START HERE



- Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center Health Promotion and Wellness Department's [Preventing Drug Abuse and Excessive Alcohol Use](#) campaign
  - [Impaired Driving Prevention Toolbox](#)

## References

- 1 U.S. Department of Transportation. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Traffic Safety Facts. 2015 Motor Vehicle Crashes: Overview. <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812318>. Published August 2016.
- 2 National Institutes of Health. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Rethinking Drinking: Alcohol and Your Health. <http://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/Strategies/TipsToTry.asp>. Published 2010.
- 3 National Institutes of Health. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Rethinking Drinking: Alcohol and Your Health. <https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/How-much-is-too-much/Whats-the-harm/What-Are-Symptoms-Of-An-Alcohol-Use-Disorder.aspx>. Published 2010.