

**COMMANDERS' GUIDE POV ACCIDENT PREVENTION PROGRAM
(EFFECTS OF DRUGS & ALCOHOL ON DRIVING SKILLS)**

TOPIC ONE: BOOZE AND LOSE

DO NOT DRIVE WHILE DRUNK OR AFTER CONSUMING TWO OR MORE DRINKS IN ONE HOUR. In fact, if you drink, **do not drive at all!** People cannot safely regulate their drinking and still drive. Arrange ahead, before you take a drink, a strategy for not driving. This could be a designated driver, staying over, or a taxi. Realistically though, some of you will drink and drive anyway. If you have consumed two or more drinks in 1 hour, wait 1 hour for each drink commencing with the second one (and drink a soft drink or water while you are waiting) before driving. This will allow your body to metabolize the alcohol. Remember, it takes your body about 1 hour to 1 1/2 hours to metabolize one drink (one drink equals approximately .02 percent on the breathalyzer). Never drink on an empty stomach. The only thing that will sober you up is time. Making LOW RISK decisions about your drinking and driving can save your life or someone else's. Nationwide it is estimated that 1 in 20 drivers are drunk as you drive down the road. AT THIS TIME, IF THE UNIT HAS A PROGRAM IN PLACE (CALLING SQUAD LEADER, DESIGNATED DRIVER, ETC.), EXPLAIN TO THE SOLDIERS.

TOPIC TWO: ALCOHOL./DRUGS

The drug causing most traffic fatalities is alcohol. Other abused drugs include tranquilizers, barbiturates, antihistamines, amphetamines, cocaine, LSD, and marijuana. At least 55% of all fatal collisions involve alcohol use. Many involve a single vehicle driven in late-evening or early-morning hours on weekends. And 34% of alcohol related fatalities are people between 16 and 24 years old.

Alcohol is rapidly absorbed into the blood stream and carried through the body. It quickly affects brain functions by:

- (1) Impairing judgment.
- (2) Creating a false sense of confidence.
- (3) Reducing field of vision.
- (4) Lowering hearing acuity.
- (5) Reducing concentration.
- (6) Impairing balance, coordination, and motor skills.

The more alcohol a person consumes, the greater the impairment of their physical activities and mental faculties. Only time can eliminate alcohol from the blood. It is a slow process that is not speeded up by exercise, cold showers, or coffee. The body rids itself of alcohol through the liver at a rate of approximately one drink per 1 and 1/2 hours.

ONE DRINK

- = approximately 12 ounces of 5% beer.
- = approximately 5 ounces of 12% wine.
- = approximately 1 1/2 ounces of 180-proof distilled spirits.

If you have four of any of these drinks, it will take 4 hours for your body to clean out the alcohol.

TOPIC THREE: BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT

BAC, blood alcohol concentration (also called BAL, blood alcohol level), refers to the percentage of alcohol in the blood. The more alcohol, the higher the BAC. Throughout the United States, the legal intoxication level is 0.08. Impaired driving is a chargeable offense. Blood alcohol concentration in the body is related to body weight, emotional state, physical condition, amount and kind of food in the stomach, amount of liquor consumed, and the time span of drinking.

An important point: You can be legally intoxicated and still not feel intoxicated. If you consume alcohol regularly over a period of months or years, your body "handles" liquor differently from a person who has less experience with alcohol. It is a process known as tolerance. Do not be fooled by it; a blood test or breath test will not be.

SOBERING MYTHS

- Drink a lot of coffee. - Get plenty of fresh air. Take a cold shower.

FACT

- Body burns one ounce of alcohol per hour. - Reactions are slowed sharply. - Vision narrows. - Self-control vanishes.

TOPIC FOUR: ALCOHOL AND DRIVING

a. You had "a few" to drink. Can you make it home safely? Will you or another driver, or even a pedestrian, be injured because you have been drinking and now you are planning to drive? Approximately 24,000 people will be killed this year in alcohol related accidents. That means one American life is lost every 20 minutes.

b. Alcohol affects the nervous system and the results are: slower reflexes, impaired coordination, and blurred vision. Often these symptoms occur without your knowledge. What then is the answer?

- (1) It you are going to drink, don't drive; and,
- (2) If you are going to drive, don't drink.

c. There are a number of options available if you are planning to drink and have to get from one place to another. These options are:

- (1) Use public transportation (taxi, bus, limo).

(2) Have a non-drinker drive.

(3) Establish a "designated driver" in your group who will not drink alcoholic beverages at this event.

(4) Plan on staying the night, rather than risking the road.

d. REMEMBER: IF YOU DRIVE YOURSELF TO DRINK, USE A DESIGNATED DRIVER TO GET YOU BACK HOME.

TOPIC FIVE

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT ALCOHOL, RELATED COLLISIONS?

If you drink . . . *DON'T DRIVE!*

Know your limit. Follow the one drink per hour guide, or set a limit before you go.

Remember that alcohol impairs judgment; so do not go by how you are feeling at the time.

Plan your transportation in advance use a "designated driver," call a cab, ride with a sober friend, take public transportation.

Stay put and allow time for your body to clean out the alcohol before getting behind the wheel.

TOPIC SIX: DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM

1. Prior to any deployment, units are greater risk of having a vehicular fatality as a result of someone driving under the influence of alcohol.

2. Soldiers returning to post from deployment will be at an even greater risk because they have been without alcohol for a long period of time and have a lowered tolerance level; they may tend to overindulge when celebrating, and will try to make up for lost time.

3. A person who is impaired by alcohol or drugs will not exercise good judgment even though their actions seem OK.

4. Every effort must be made to encourage the use of a designated driver. The designated driver must be identified before arriving at the bar or party. The group should plan to drive to the bar or party as a group and not show up in separate vehicles.

5. Numerous bars, taverns, and clubs on and off post offer special incentives to the designated driver such as free soft drinks and, in some cases, free food or snacks. The designated driver just needs to let the server know that they are the designated driver.

TOPIC SEVEN: DRINKING AND DRIVING

1. Summer Parties

- a. Provide non-alcoholic drinks for those who do not want to drink and for those under the legal drinking age.
- b. Never force drinks on your guests.
- c. Plan to close the bar at least 1 hour prior to the end of the party.
- d. Offer coffee as "the one for the road."
- e. Never let a guest drive away from your party under the influence of alcohol.

2. Throttle and Bottle

- a. Space your drinks to avoid getting too much alcohol; i.e., one drink per hour.
- b. Set a limit on the number of drinks you are going to have and stay to it.
- c. If you feel like you have had too much, don't drive; call a cab.
- d. Stay alert for the driver who has had too much.
- e. Best solution is don't drink if you are going to drive.

3. Penalties for Getting Caught

- a. Revocation of post driving privileges.
- b. General Officer Letter of Reprimand (ES or above) or Commander's Letter of Reprimand (E1)
- c. Stiff fines/jail sentence/suspended license levied per state law.

TOPIC EIGHT: ALTERNATIVES TO DRUNK DRIVING

a. The best and safest advice is DOPJIT DRINK! Insist on your right not to drink. If you do choose to drink, then take steps to protect yourself and others:

- (1) Eat before and as you drink.
- (2) Set a limit and stick to it.
- (3) Drink slowly.
- (4) Stop drinking in time. Be sure your body has had time to eliminate the alcohol from your system.
- (5) Know what you are drinking
- (6) BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF.

b. If you have been drinking:

- (1) Use a DESIGNATED DRIVER, Most places let the designated driver drink non-alcoholic beverages free.
- (2) Have a sober friend drive you home.
- (3) If at a friend's house, stay overnight.
- (4) Call a TAXI, CO, SQUAD LEADER, PLATOON SERGEANT, SDO/NCO, MPs.
- (5) DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE.

CONCLUSION: If you plan to drink, do not risk other peoples, lives, your life, or your career. Do Not drink and drive. You will not get in trouble if you call, you will get in trouble if you do not call.

TOPIC NINE

IF YOU ARE HOSTING A PARTY WHERE ALCOHOL IS BEING SERVED

a. Provide attractive non-alcoholic beverages and coffee. Let guests know they are available.

b. Promote food consumption. Encourage guests to eat before and during drinking. Offer snacks and appetizers, especially protein - avoid salty foods.

c. Do not pressure your guests to drink - and never offer "one for the road."

d. Have food and coffee available at the end of the evening. The time that it takes to accomplish all of this will buy time for the liver to process more of the alcohol already in the digestive system.

- e. Shut down the bar at least 1 hour before the party will end.
- f. Support passengers who do not want to ride with a driver they feel are unsafe.
- g. Arrange transportation for alcohol-impaired guests, or encourage them to spend the night.