

## Holiday Drinking Safety Talk

Holiday gatherings often include toasts, craft beer or spirit tastings, and of course the all too familiar late-night “just one more” moments. Holiday excitement, long travel days, and irregular meals can increase the effects of alcohol on a person, especially when driving is thrown into the mix. A few practical moves before and during celebrations can ensure the safety of everyone.

### Understanding Standard Drinks

Setting a clear baseline helps guide moderation.

- A *standard drink* contains about **14 grams of pure alcohol**:
  - **12 oz. beer** (5% ABV)
  - **5 oz. wine** (12% ABV)
  - **1.5 oz. spirits** (80 proof)
- Pour sizes at home or bars often exceed these amounts so tracking intake means watching serving size, not just glass count.

### Moderation and Awareness

- Exceeding moderate drinking levels, especially binge-style patterns, raises crash risk and other serious harms.
- Staying well below heavy-drinking thresholds recommended by public-health agencies ensures safer travel and better health.

### Recognizing Impairment

Even small amounts of alcohol affect coordination and judgment.

- Driving impairment begins around **0.05% BAC**, with significant decline by **0.08% BAC**.
- Warning signs include:
  - Slower reaction time
  - Poor tracking or lane control
  - Impaired judgment or overconfidence

### Simple Moderation Game Plan

- **Eat first, then sip**: food slows alcohol absorption.
- **Pace drinks**: alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.
- **Set a limit**: decide on a personal cap before the event.
- **Check ABV**: many craft beers exceed standard alcohol content.
- **Hydrate well**: water helps, but coffee or “quick fixes” do *not* restore sobriety.
- **Keep keys parked**: use a “valet bowl” for car keys until departure plans are confirmed.



## Hosting with Safety in Mind

Thoughtful hosting reduces DUI risk for everyone.

- Mention the designated-driver plan on invitations.
- Serve satisfying food throughout the event.
- Include fun, alcohol-free activities.
- Stop serving alcohol **well before** guests leave.
- Provide celebratory zero-proof beverages that feel festive, not secondary.

## Quick Impairment Checklist

If any of the following are observed, driving must be off the table:

- Difficulty focusing or tracking conversations
- Slowed response or reaction time
- Unsteady stance or balance issues
- Slurred speech or raised voice volume
- Dropping or spilling drinks
- Signs of risky or impulsive behavior

## The unfortunate reality

- Roughly **30% of U.S. traffic fatalities** involve drunk driving.
- Thanksgiving ranks among the **most dangerous travel periods** each year.
- Hundreds of roadway deaths occur annually during the holiday week; many linked to impaired driving.

## Conclusion

Holidays are about connection, gratitude, and safe returns. With realistic drinking limits, early planning, and a commitment to sober transportation, holiday traditions stay joyful, and everyone makes it home to enjoy leftovers the next day.

## Discussion Points

1. *What are some clear indicators of alcohol induced impairment?*