



2008 FACT SHEET

Virginia Drunk Driving Facts

- In 2007, 378 persons were killed in alcohol-related crashes, a one-percent increase from 2006. More than one-third (37%) of Virginia traffic fatalities were alcohol-related.¹
- 7,130 persons were injured in alcohol-related crashes in 2007, a small decrease from 2006 (7,543 persons), representing a 16-percent decrease since 2002 (8,465).²
- 25,243 persons were tested with blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 percent or greater in 2007. The average BAC of tested drinking drivers now averages .1407 BAC.³

Checkpoint Strikeforce

- *Checkpoint Strikeforce* is a research-based, zero-tolerance initiative within the Mid-Atlantic states, and designed to both catch and arrest drunk drivers via sobriety checkpoints and other enhanced law enforcement efforts and to educate the public about the dangers and consequences of drunk driving.
- Over half (55%) of the country's 2006 traffic fatalities occurred on rural roads.⁴
- The campaign is supported locally by a grant from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' Highway Safety Office (DMV).
- Males between the ages of 21 and 35 are the primary target audience. This demographic group is typically harder to reach with public awareness campaigns and statistically at the highest risk for drunk driving.

Results

- From October 1, 2007 through June 1, 2008, *Checkpoint Strikeforce's* local law enforcement activities resulted in 1,116 DUI arrests, 1,229 safety belt citations and 256 child restraint citations. Thirty-six juveniles were cited for underage drinking, and there were 14,665 other arrests, citations and warnings. These figures do not include results from the Virginia State Police's enforcement activities.⁵
- More persons are convicted annually of DUI in Virginia (28,787 in 2007) than a sold-out concert at Nissan Pavilion.⁶
- Of those convicted for driving under the influence (DUI) in 2007, 81 percent were male.⁷

Public Opinion

- A July 2008 public opinion survey of Virginia drivers found:⁸
 - Sixty-eight percent of Virginia drivers perceive drunk driving as one of the most serious dangers faced on the road.
 - Drunk driving is seen as a much riskier behavior than an unprotected one-night stand (59% to 25%), sleeping with your best friend's spouse or significant other (68% to 20%), getting drunk or high at work (70% to 19%) sky diving (89% to 9%), and telling off your boss (88% to 9%). The poll indicated that drivers perceive two lane rural highways as the most difficult type of road to drive on after having a few drinks, and it is one of the most likely areas to be stopped by law enforcement.
 - More than any other consequence, including arrest or death, 80 percent of Virginia drivers fear killing or injuring someone else as a result of drunk driving.
 - Sobriety Checkpoints are strongly supported. More than 9 out of 10 (93%) of Virginia drivers support the use of sobriety checkpoints.

¹ Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles: "2007 Virginia Crash Facts"

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA): 2006 FARS Data

⁵ Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

⁶ Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles: "2007 Virginia Crash Facts"

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Checkpoint Strikeforce/MWR Strategies: Survey of Virginia Area Drivers, July 2008

Law Enforcement Component

- Law enforcement agencies are planning to conduct at least one sobriety checkpoint and/or saturation patrol every week in Virginia. The checkpoint blitz will continue through the end of 2008.
- Sobriety checkpoints are a highly-targeted way to fight drunk driving because they are strategically timed when and located where drunk driving is more likely to occur, putting them among the most effective tools to stop drunk driving.
- Aggressively deployed sobriety checkpoints can result in a 20-percent reduction in alcohol-related fatal crashes.⁹

Public Awareness Component

- Complementing the aggressive deployment of sobriety checkpoints is a proactive, highly visible, resonant advertising and public awareness effort.
- This year, one million dollars has been dedicated to the ad campaign and educational outreach efforts in Virginia. The ad campaign targeted stations, which will air creative advertisements and were written and produced to resonate with the target audience. The ads utilize the findings of the campaign's opinion poll and focus groups to create messages that hit home with the target audience of males, ages 21 to 35.
- The ads will run in Virginia over 4 ½ months. The radio and television spots will be played nearly 25,000 times targeting 21 to 35-year old males in Virginia.

Listen to the ads and get more information at <http://www.checkpointstrikeforce.net/educate.html>.

⁹ Insurance Institute for Highway Safety