



Drug-Impaired Driving Facts and Information



DRUGGED DRIVING IS DANGEROUS DRIVING

Drug-impaired driving is a problem on California highways. Like drunk driving, drugged driving is impaired driving, which means it is dangerous and illegal nationwide. Whether the drug is legally prescribed, an illegal illicit drug or marijuana, driving while drug-impaired poses a threat to the driver, vehicle passengers, and other road users. The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), the California Highway Patrol, Police and Sheriffs wants to spread the word about drug-impaired driving and to remind all drivers: If you are impaired by drugs and thinking about driving, designate a driver.

Unless otherwise noted, all information below is sourced by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

- Drivers must never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This not only means refraining from drunk driving, but also from drug-impaired driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) [2013/14 National Roadside Survey of Alcohol and Drug Use by Drivers](#) found that nearly one in four weekend drivers tested positive for at least one drug that could impair their ability to drive safely.
- Since 2006, the percentage of drivers in fatal crashes in California tested for the presence of an impairing drug other than alcohol in their system has increased dramatically.

CRASH YEAR	PERCENTAGE OF DRUG POSITIVE AMONG KNOWN TESTED	INCREASE/DECREASE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR	PERCENTAGE INCREASE/ DECREASE SINCE 2006
2006	26.2%	-	-
2007	26.2%	0.0%	<u>0.0%</u>
2008	26.4%	1.0%	1.0%
2009	27.8%	5.0%	6.4%
2010	29.6%	5.9%	13.1%
2011	30.3%	2.4%	15.9%
2012	30.5%	0.6%	16.6%
2013	38.6%	21.0%	47.5%
2014	38.2%	-1.1%	46.0%
2015	42.6%	10.5%	63.1%

- In 2012, a California Office of Traffic Safety study showed that drugs that can affect driving were found in one of every seven weekend nighttime drivers. The survey results showed more drivers tested positive for drugs that may impair driving (14 percent) than did for alcohol (7.3 percent). Of the drugs, marijuana was most prevalent, at 7.4 percent, slightly more than alcohol.



Drug-Impaired Driving Facts and Information



Driving? Pass On the Keys

- It doesn't matter what term is used, if a person is high, stoned, wasted, or drunk, he or she is impaired. Driving while impaired by any substance is illegal and can be deadly to the driver and other road users. It's that simple.
- If you think driving while high won't affect you, you are wrong: It has been proven that Delta-9 Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) – the chemical responsible for most of marijuana's psychoactive effects – slows reaction times, impairs cognitive performance, and makes it more difficult for drivers to keep a steady position in their lane. This is a deadly combination.
- Something as simple as cold medication or an over-the-counter sleep aid could impair driving. If it does, a driver can be arrested for a DUI.
- If you are taking a new prescription drug or a higher dose of a current prescription drug, do not drive until you know what effect it has on your judgement, coordination, and reaction time. Any effect could impair your driving ability.
- If your doctor writes you a new prescription or increases a current dosage, be sure to discuss with the doctor whether you should drive while taking the medication, or be sure to ask the pharmacist when you pick up the prescription. If you feel impaired, you are too dangerous to drive – designate a driver.
- Always tell your doctor of any drugs you are taking (prescription, over-the-counter, and illegal) so they may accurately counsel you on whether it is safe to drive while taking them.
- Certain medications may not impair you on their own, but if taken with a second medication, marijuana or especially with alcohol, they may cause impairment. Any form of impaired driving is illegal.

Play It Safe

- If a driver has ingested an impairing substance, such as prescription drugs, sleep medication, marijuana in any form – smoked, vaped or via edibles – or any form of illegal drug, he or she should not drive. Passengers should never ride with an impaired driver. If you think a driver may be impaired, do not get in the car with them.
- If you are drug-impaired, pass the key to a sober driver who can safely drive you to your destination. Like drunk driving, it is essential that drug-impaired drivers refrain from driving a vehicle. It is never okay to drive while impaired by any substance.
- Have a friend who is about to drive while impaired by medication, marijuana or drugs? Take the keys away and arrange to get them home safely. Don't worry about offending someone; it's their life and the lives of others that matter.

Financial Impacts

DUI violations are not just for drunk driving. Remember, any impairment, including drugs, is illegal if you are operating a vehicle. On average, a DUI can set you back \$10,000 in attorney fees, fines, court costs, lost time at work, higher insurance rates, car towing and repairs, and more. If you are driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol, you could be arrested for a DUI.