



# RHUMB LINES

*Straight Lines to Navigate By*



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## Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol

*"The decision whether or not to drink alcohol is a personal one, but the decision to drive after drinking can have disastrous consequences for you, your family and the Navy. Make a plan to be successful. Simply put, if you drink, don't drive."*  
– **RADM Arthur J. Johnson, Commander, Naval Safety Center**

### Lower BAC limits reflect risk of impairment

- The blood alcohol content (BAC) limit is now .08 in all 50 states. The BAC limit is even lower in countries such as Japan. Sailors are responsible for knowing and obeying the alcohol laws where they're stationed.
- In single-vehicle crashes, the relative fatality risk for drivers with BACs between .05 and .10 is more than 11 times greater than for drivers with a BAC of zero.
- Research suggests that the most crucial aspect of impairment is a reduction in the ability to handle several tasks at once, which is precisely the skill set required when driving a car.

### DUIs carry a high price tag

- Illinois is one of the few states that provides an official estimate of DUI charges. A conviction in Illinois costs the average drunk driver \$14,660. The national average is anywhere from \$5,000 to \$20,000.
- Direct costs associated with a DUI conviction include fines, court fees, automobile impound fees, attorney fees, mandatory alcohol counseling and education, and many more.
- Indirect costs include higher insurance rates, often for years after your license is reinstated.

### Lower cost alternatives are worth the investment

- Get a hotel room (average cost \$100) or call a cab (average cost \$30-\$50).
- Plan in advance for a designated driver who will commit to drinking only non-alcoholic beverages.
- Take advantage of your command or installation's tipsy taxi program. Contact your local safety office for specific details.

### Career implications can have lasting effects

- Civil court conviction could carry jail time or community service that impacts a Sailor's ability to perform his or her mission.
- If charged at court martial and convicted, the penalties could result in a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of pay and allowances, and confinement in the brig.

### Key Messages

- Know your people. Khaki leadership should focus on those Sailors at greatest risk.
- When Sailors feel that they are an important part of the mission and community, they are less willing to jeopardize their lives and careers by abusing alcohol.
- Planning for port calls, especially overseas where the drinking age is often lower, can reduce incidents.
- A successful substance-abuse program must have visible support from the top.
- Chiefs' community and division work center supervisors are valuable participants in reducing alcohol abuse, when appropriately engaged.

### Facts & Figures

- According to the Navy Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention team, Sailors most at risk of abusing alcohol are: E-1 to E-5; between 18-25 years of age; within the first three years of first enlistment; and within 12 months, either before or after their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.
- 20% of all Navy alcohol related incidents happen within 12 months of Sailors turning 21.
- Tools, ideas and success stories of alcohol-abuse-prevention programs can be found at [www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/NADAP](http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/NADAP) and at the Naval Safety Center's Best Practices site at <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/bestpractices/ARI-DUI>.