

Hidden Costs Of Driving While Impaired

Missouri law enforcement officers do not tolerate impaired drivers or the devastation they cause in the lives of others. If a law enforcement officer suspects a driver is driving while impaired by alcohol, drugs, or both, the officer will administer field sobriety tests. The tests take place immediately, on the side of the road. Based upon the driver's performance, the officer will determine whether or not to arrest the driver for DWI. Any level of impairment may result in a DWI charge.

Over age 21: A blood alcohol level of .08 percent is enough evidence to prove impairment.

Under age 21: A blood alcohol level of .02 percent is enough evidence to prove impairment.

It is illegal in Missouri for anyone under the age of 21 to purchase, attempt to purchase, possess, or consume alcoholic beverages.

Hidden Costs

When someone is arrested for driving while intoxicated, one might expect:

- Court fines/costs,
- Restitution paid to the victim,
- Increase in insurance rates,
- Driver license sanctions, fees, and reinstatement,
- Towing fees/vehicle repair or replacement,
- Bail money if arrested,
- Inconvenience and cost of ignition interlock and monitoring devices,
- Civil suit filed by victim, and
- Attorney fees.

But, the cost is more than just financial. The consequences of a DWI conviction can undermine a person's future opportunities and haunt them for years. Here are some other things to think about:

A DWI conviction may also involve:

- The experience of being in jail and possibility of future incarceration.
- Shame and embarrassment.
- Participation in drunk driving education programs.
- Personal and professional relationships may be affected.
- College financial aid, admissions, and scholarships may be affected.
- Potential loss of employment or professional licensing, and job prospects.
- Emotional consequences of being labeled a 'felon' and going through the criminal justice system.
- A convicted felon may not vote, run for office, or own firearms.
- Life-altering injuries to yourself and others.
- Lifelong regret if someone is hurt or killed. That's a lot of guilt to live with.

Instead of drinking and driving, choose one of these better options:

- Designate a sober driver.
- Locate free ride services before you go out.
- Call a family member or friend to ask for a ride.
- Take the bus.
- Take a taxi.
- Stay with a friend.
- Get a hotel room for the night.

Or, you can risk it all.

It's up to you.

**PLEASE DON'T RISK IT.
DRIVE SOBER.**

More detailed explanations of Missouri's DWI laws can be found in the Missouri State Highway Patrol's "You Drink, You Drive, You Pay" brochure. You can find this brochure at www.statepatrol.dps.mo.gov under publications/brochures.