
Minnesota Impaired Driving Fact Sheet, 2012

Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety, June 2013

In 2012, Minnesota recorded 131 alcohol-related traffic deaths — accounting for 33 percent of all traffic deaths — matching historical trends.

Alcohol-related crashes, injuries and fatalities continue to be a serious problem in Minnesota. Overall, males and young adults are overrepresented in alcohol-related crashes and account for a disproportionate share of fatalities. More than one-half million Minnesotans with driver license records have a DWI.

- The legal alcohol limit for drivers in Minnesota is 0.08. It is always illegal to drive with an alcohol-concentration level of 0.08 or above. Motorists can be arrested under 0.08 if they demonstrate impaired driving behavior. If a motorist's alcohol-concentration is at 0.08 percent or higher, it is a criminal offense with penalties ranging from misdemeanor to felony. It is also a violation of civil law that triggers automatic driver license revocation for up to a year.
- During 2010–2012 in Minnesota there were 1,174 traffic deaths and 398 (34 percent) were alcohol-related.
- Over the same three years, there were 88,059 DWI arrests. In 2012, 28,418 DWI arrests were made.
- In 2012, the Twin Cities' metro area had 51.6 percent of the impaired driving arrests and the 80-county non-metro area 48.4 percent.
- In 2012, males accounted for 73 percent of impaired driving arrests. However, recent yearly trends show an increase in female DWI offenders. Since 2002, female DWI offenses have increased 5 percent — a significant gain according to DPS — and they now represent one-quarter of all DWI offenses. In 2003, 6,535 females were arrested for DWI. In 2012, 7,156 females were DWI offenders.
- Young persons — especially people in their 20s — accounted for a disproportionate share of all arrests. In 2012, people in their 20s represented 42 percent of DWI arrests.
- Of all Minnesota residents, more than one-half million— 584,529 — have a DWI on record. Thus, one in seven persons in Minnesota with a driving record (including those with licenses revoked, cancelled, etc.) has a DWI; 240,295 (one in 16) have two or more arrests; 114,382 (one in 35) have three or more; and, 51,711 (one in 78) have four or more.
- Most impaired driving offenders are first-time offenders. In 2012, 16,944 (60 percent of all violators) were issued their first DWI. Still, many offenses are committed by persons with prior DWIs on their record. In 2012, 11,474 (40 percent) of violators had prior DWIs on record.