



Leading public health and safety organizations urge you to lower the limit of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) while driving to .05% in Washington.

Support Senate Bill (SB) 5002 – Pass a Clean Bill!

The Issue:

- Traffic crashes are a deadly and costly threat to Washington families and visitors that requires urgent attention and action.
- According to recently released data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in the first nine months of 2022, 591 people were killed on state roads, a 21 percent increase over the same period in 2021.ⁱ
- Traffic crashes also cost Washington taxpayers nearly \$5.8 billion annually when adjusted for inflation according to NHTSA.

The Solution:

- Adopting a .05 percent BAC limit will dissuade drinking and driving and curb needless highway deaths and injuries which threaten all road users.ⁱⁱ
- Research and laboratory evidence finds that most adults are significantly impaired at .05 percent BAC.ⁱⁱⁱ
- When behind the wheel of a car, driving skills are degraded resulting in reduced coordination, decreased ability to track moving objects, difficulty steering and diminished response to emergency driving situations.^{iv}
- The risk of being killed in a single-vehicle crash with BACs of .05 to .079 percent is seven to 21 times higher than for drivers without measurable alcohol.^v

The Proof:

- Last year, the NHTSA released a [study](#), *Evaluation of Utah's .05 BAC Per Se Law*, that provides critical data on the success of Utah's .05 percent BAC law which was enacted in 2017.
- The study finds that Utah experienced a nearly 20 percent drop in traffic fatalities in 2019 (248), the first year the law was in effect, compared to 2016 (281), the last year before the law was enacted.^{vi}
- This improvement in roadway safety occurred despite an increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and outpaced neighboring states as well as the nation as a whole.
- Opponents may state that lowering the BAC will reduce alcohol sales and endanger certain businesses, but this assertion is not supported by experience or data.^{vii} In fact, the Utah study found that state revenues from taxes related to the hospitality industry continued to rise, and tourism increased.
- Additionally, studies show that when states lowered their BAC limits from .10 to .08 percent, there were no adverse impacts on the operation of the criminal justice system. This has been affirmed from criminal justice experts in Utah, as well as the Utah study which documents the fact that arrests due to drunk driving did not spike nor was the criminal justice system overwhelmed.
- Moreover, more than 90 countries have already adopted .05 percent BAC or lower limits and affirmed the safety benefits of the policy.^{viii}

Advance SB 5002 without amendments - Protect Washington families and visitors to the state!

ⁱ National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2022, December). Early estimate of motor vehicle traffic fatalities for the first 9 months (January–September) of 2022 (Crash•Stats Brief Statistical Summary. Report No. DOT HS 813 406). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

ⁱⁱ NTSB, *.05 BAC Safety Briefing Facts*, February 2017.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} MADD, *What is .08?* Available at: <http://www.madd.org/drunken-driving/about/understanding-08.html>

^v Fell, Jim C., Voas, Robert B, *The effectiveness of a 0.05 blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for driving in the United States*, PIRE. June 2014.

^{vi} United States, Department of Transportation, NHTSA, Office of Behavioral Safety Research, *Evaluation of Utah's .05 BAC Per Se Law [Traffic Tech]*, [DOT HS 813 234](#); February 2022.

^{vii} NTSB, *.05 BAC Safety Briefing Facts*, February 2017.

^{viii} Fell, James C., *The Merits of Adopting a 0.05 Administrative Blood Alcohol Concentration Limit for Driving*, [Am J Public Health](#). 2016 June; 106(6): 977–978.