



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!

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 2021, there were 670 fatalities on state roads, and nearly forty percent of those (388) involved drunk driving.ⁱ In the first nine months of 2022, 591 people were killed on state roads, a 21 percent increase over the same period in 2021.ⁱⁱ
- Traffic crashes also cost Washington taxpayers 6.3 billion annually when adjusted for inflation according to NHTSA.ⁱⁱⁱ

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.^{iv}
- Research and laboratory evidence finds that most adults are significantly impaired at .05 percent BAC.^v
- 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.^{vi}
- 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.^{vii}

The Proof:

- More than 100 countries have already adopted .05 percent BAC or lower limits and affirmed the safety benefits of the policy.^{viii}
- In these countries average alcohol consumption is equal or higher to that in the United States, but they have less deaths caused by drunk driving.^{ix}
- NHTSA released a [study](#), *Evaluation of Utah's .05 BAC Per Se Law*, that provides critical data on the success of the policy in the U.S. 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.^x Alcohol-impaired driving fatalities were 30 percent lower that year than the average for the previous five years.^{xi}
- 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.^{xii}
- 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 change in BAC limit did save an estimated 24,868 lives between 1983 and 2014.^{xiii}
- Advancing .05 percent BAC legislation will reduce dangerous drinking and driving across all levels of impairment, including high BAC, to prevent deaths and injuries.

Advance SB 5002 - Protect Washington families and visitors to the state!

ⁱ State Traffic Safety Information for Washington (2021), NHSTA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>.

ⁱⁱ 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.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.

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

^v Ibid.

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

^{vii} 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.

^{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.

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

^x 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.

^{xi} State Traffic Safety Information for Utah (2021), NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>.

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

^{xiii} Effectiveness of Lowering the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Limit for Driving from 0.10 to 0.08 Grams per Deciliter in the United States.