

Impaired Driving in Minnesota

Incidence of Impaired Driving

For one of every 150 miles driven in Minnesota in 1997, a legally intoxicated person (BAC $\geq .10$) sat behind the wheel. Minnesota police report 5,901 crashes involving a driver or pedestrian with a positive blood alcohol concentration (BAC). Formulas developed by NHTSA were used to estimate the number of alcohol-related crashes where alcohol involvement is not reported by the police. An estimated total of 16,600 crashes in Minnesota involved alcohol. These crashes killed 193 and injured an estimated 10,100 people.

Impaired Driving by Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)

In 1997, Minnesota drivers with:

- BACs of $\geq .10$ and above were involved in an estimated 15,800 crashes that killed 161 and injured 8,800
- BACs between $.08-.09$ were involved in an estimated 300 crashes that killed 9 and injured 400
- Positive BACs below $.08$ were involved in an estimated 500 crashes that killed 23 and injured 900

Costs

Alcohol is a factor in 16% of Minnesota crash costs. Alcohol-related crashes in Minnesota cost the public more than \$1.5 billion in 1997, including more than \$0.5 billion in monetary costs and almost \$1.0 billion in quality of life losses. (For definitions of the cost categories, see the definitions fact sheet.) Alcohol-related crashes are deadlier and more serious than other crashes. People other than the drinking driver paid \$0.7 billion of the alcohol-related crash bill.

Costs Per Alcohol-Related Injury

The average alcohol-related fatality in Minnesota cost \$3.5 million:

- \$1.2 million in monetary costs
- \$2.3 million in quality of life losses

The estimated cost per injured survivor of an alcohol-related crash averaged \$87,000:

- \$33,000 in monetary costs

- \$54,000 in quality of life losses

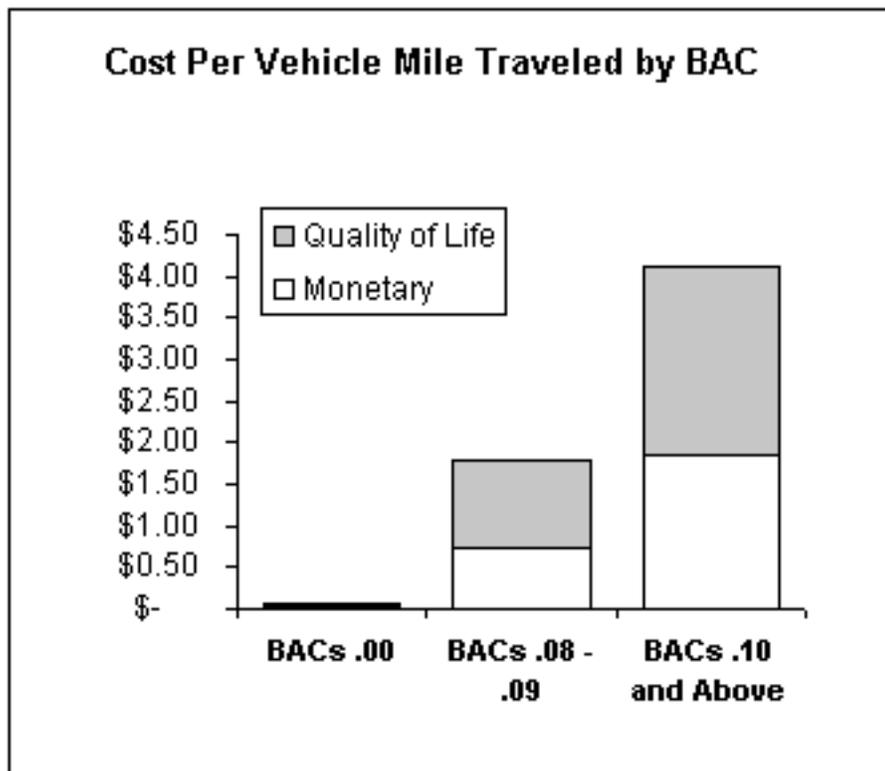
Costs Per Mile Driven

Crash costs in Minnesota averaged:

- \$4.10 per mile driven at BACs of .10 and above
- \$1.80 per mile driven at BACs between .08-.09
- \$0.10 per mile driven at BACs of .00

Costs Per Drink

The societal costs of alcohol-related crashes in Minnesota averaged \$0.60 per drink consumed. People other than the drinking driver paid \$0.30 per drink.



Impact on Auto Insurance Rates

Alcohol-related crashes accounted for an estimated 11% of Minnesota's auto insurance payments. Reducing alcohol-related crashes by 10% would save \$20 million in claims payments and loss adjustment expenses.

Prevention Savings

Minnesota already has many important impaired driving laws. However, a number of additional strategies can be used to mitigate the harm from impaired driving.

- **Enforcing Serving Intoxicated Patrons Law:** Using undercover police officers to enforce Minnesota's law against serving alcohol to intoxicated bar and restaurant patrons would reduce alcohol-related crash fatalities by an estimated 11%. It would cost \$0.30 per licensed driver and save \$30 per licensed driver.
- **.08 BAC Law:** Lowering Minnesota's BAC limit to .08 would reduce alcohol-related fatalities by 8% and save an estimated \$3 per licensed driver. The value of mobility losses and alcohol sales reductions resulting from the law are the large majority of the \$0.20 cost per licensed driver.
- **Sobriety Checkpoint Program:** Intensive enforcement of Minnesota's BAC limit with highly visible sobriety checkpoints would reduce alcohol-related fatalities by at least 15% and save \$65,700 per checkpoint. Including costs of travel delay and the value of mobility losses by

impaired drivers apprehended and sanctioned, the costs of conducting a checkpoint would average \$9,800 including police resources.

- **Primary Belt Law:** Primary belt laws allow law enforcement to stop and ticket a driver for non-use of a safety belt without requiring the driver to be cited for or have committed another offense. Unbelted drivers account for 75% of impaired driving fatalities. A primary belt law can reduce alcohol-related fatalities in Minnesota by 10%. The law would save \$200 per licensed driver. If enforced with frequent belt-use checkpoints, the value of temporary discomfort experienced by some new belt wearers and travel delay costs at checkpoints would be the large majority of the law's \$4.30 cost per licensed driver.

**Public Services Research Institute
8201 Corporate Drive, Suite 220
Landover, MD 20785
(301) 731-9891**

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