

## WHY ALL THE FUSS ABOUT DRUNK DRIVING?

Each year in Florida there are approximately 250,000 traffic crashes. About 24,000 are alcohol related crashes that account for about 1,000 fatalities. Alcohol related fatalities represent about 33 % of all traffic fatalities. The amount of alcohol in the bloodstream is called the "Blood Alcohol Level (BAL)." In Florida, a person is legally drunk when the BAL is .08 or more. However, a person's driving is impaired starting at about .05 BAL. The body can burn off only about one ounce of alcohol, about one drink, per hour. The BAL is affected by a person's body weight, loss of sleep, amount of food in the stomach and other physical and emotional factors.

If a law officer has reason to suspect a person is Driving Under the Influence (DUI), the person may be requested to submit to: a breath alcohol test, a urine test for controlled substances and a blood test for blood alcohol or for controlled substances. If a person refuses a required breath, urine or blood test, it will result in loss of a person's driver's license and prosecution for DUI.

On July 1, 1982, one of the nation's toughest laws on drunken driving took effect in Florida. This law provided for strict penalties if convicted of drunken driving.

### First Convictions provided for:

Fines of at least \$250 (up to \$500); with BAL of .20 or more or with a minor in the vehicle up to \$1,000

Jail Term up to 6 months; with BAL of .20 or higher or with a minor in vehicle, up to 9 months.

Driver's license revoked at least 6 months (up to 1 year)

Community service of 50 hours is required

DUI school for 12 hours is required - paid for by the person convicted

### Repeated Convictions can provide for:

Fines of up to \$2,500, jail term of up to 1 year, driver's license revoked up to 10 years and DUI school can require further treatment without court approval

Paying the Toll for DUI can be a sobering experience:

### Approximate Cost

Vehicle Towing (\$30-\$50)

Bond release from jail (\$250)

Attorney's fees if you plead guilty (\$350-\$700)

Attorney's fees if you plead not guilty (\$750-\$2,000)

Witness fees (\$200-\$300)

Fine for 1st conviction (\$250-\$500)

Court Costs (\$26-\$50)

Probation costs (\$120-\$300)

Alcohol Safety Educational School (\$50-\$125)

Driver's license reinstatement fee (\$35)

Approximate annual insurance rate increase for 3 years (\$1,000)

DRIVERS SHOULD REMEMBER TO STOP DRINKING BEFORE REACHING THE LIMIT. Once you know your limit, stick to it when you plan on driving. If you do exceed your limit, don't risk driving. Be responsible and stay where you are until you can drive safely, or have a sober person drive. Or take a cab - it's worth the wait. Protect your friends, too - don't let them drive drunk. Help friends when they have had too much. If it's at a party, offer friends a non-alcoholic beverage. Let friends stay at your home until they are able to drive. Give friends a ride, or call a cab. The body burns off about one ounce (one drink) of alcohol per hour. It takes about four hours to cancel the effects of four drinks. Nothing will speed this up--not exercise, not food, not even a cold shower.