

# Lesson 7.1

## EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON DRIVING SAFELY

### OBJECTIVES

How alcohol affects the mental and physical abilities needed for driving safely.  
Blood-alcohol concentration (BAC).  
Factors that affect blood-alcohol concentration.  
Common myths and facts about the use of alcohol.

### VOCABULARY

Alcoholism  
Inebriation  
Intoxication  
Alcohol concentration (BAC)  
Impaired driver

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug in our society. It is by far the most frequently used drug that leads to drivers being fatally injured. Even though it is illegal for teenagers to buy or consume alcohol, they represent a significant percentage of alcohol abusers. For teenage drivers in particular, the combination of inexperience and alcohol can be fatal.

All states enforce a minimum drinking age of 21. Laws against underage drinking and driving are vigorously enforced. Alcohol-related educational programs in schools and communities have increased. Unfortunately, despite these efforts to enforce laws and educate young drivers, alcohol-related collisions are still a major safety problem.

### Alcohol Facts

Some people may not be aware that alcohol is categorized as a drug because it can be purchased legally by anyone over 21 years old. It is categorized as a drug because of the effects it has on the central nervous system.

There are different types of alcohol, including

- ethyl alcohol, or ethanol, also known as grain alcohol
- isopropyl alcohol, or isopropanol, also known as rubbing alcohol
- methanol, or methyl alcohol, also known as wood alcohol

Ethanol, or what is commonly referred to as alcohol, is found in the alcoholic drinks people consume.

The effects of drinking alcohol vary from person to person; however, everyone who drinks alcoholic beverages is affected to some degree. One of the most serious problems of drinking alcohol is people who drink and drive. Even a small amount of alcohol in your bloodstream can affect your coordination and ability to think clearly.

### Alcohol and Your Driving Ability

Regardless of the type of alcoholic drink, as soon as the alcohol from even one drink reaches the brain, it affects the way a person thinks and behaves. The same amount of alcohol doesn't affect all people the same way; in fact,

alcohol doesn't even affect the same person in the same way in all situations. The best way to avoid changes in your behavior and thinking is to abstain from drinking.

**Effects on the Central Nervous System** It may be surprising to learn that alcohol is classified as a depressant. Alcohol acts on the central nervous system like an anesthetic, slowing the activity of the brain. Alcohol is not digested in the stomach. It is absorbed directly into the blood stream through the walls and linings of the entire digestive tract.

Once alcohol enters the bloodstream, it quickly flows to the brain. Alcohol has the greatest effect on the parts of the brain that control judgment and reasoning—the two most critical mental skills needed by drivers. Physical abilities become impaired soon afterward.




**Effects on Judgment and Reasoning** A driver impaired by alcohol has a decreased ability to reason clearly and make sound judgments even though the driver may feel that these abilities are sharper, quicker, and more accurate than usual. But in fact, the opposite is true.

A person in this condition can develop a false feeling of well being, or **euphoria**. People who are in a euphoric state of mind may take chances they normally would not take, chances that may be deadly when behind the wheel of a car.

Alcohol also weakens a person's **inhibitions**, the forces of personality that restrain or hold back impulsive behaviors. As alcohol content in the body increases, a driver's inhibitions relax to the point that the driver might drive too fast, take needless risks, or even drive into high-risk situations without knowing or caring.

A driver whose judgment and reasoning abilities are impaired by alcohol cannot properly use the IPDE Process or Zone Control techniques. The driver is less able to interpret correctly what he or she sees. Scanning scenes may become erratic and the target area may become unclear.

FIGURE 1  
EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON BEHAVIOR

Number of drinks in one hour	BAC	Effects
1 serving 	0.02–.03%	Inhibitions are lessened. Judgment and reasoning begin to be affected.
3 servings 	0.05–.09%	Unable to think clearly. Judgment and reasoning are not reliable. Muscular coordination is impaired.
4 servings 	0.10–.12%	After four drinks, hearing, speech, vision, and balance are affected. Most behaviors are affected.



**Effects on Vision** One of the most dangerous effects of alcohol is impaired vision. Impairment occurs in visual acuity, peripheral vision, night vision, color vision, and depth perception. Impaired vision combined with diminished judgment and slow reaction time can cause a driver to be in a conflict. For example, the driver in **FIGURE 2** might not be able to identify the pedestrian in time to stop safely.

**FIGURE 2**

A driver who's been drinking may have difficulty reacting. **Apply Concepts** Why might a driver who has been drinking have difficulty seeing the pedestrian and avoiding conflict?



**Visual acuity** After only a few alcoholic drinks, a driver's visual acuity and ability to focus become impaired. In addition, because alcohol distorts vision, it reduces the effectiveness of the driver's orderly visual search pattern. A driver who's been drinking is more likely to fixate his or her eyes in a stare, thus hindering the scanning and searching process. The driver is likely to look straight ahead or at any object that attracts his or her attention. A driver who stares is unaware of vehicles that may be to the side or to the rear.

**Reflex action** Alcohol also affects the reflex action of the eyes. At night, this impairment can be critical. As headlights of oncoming vehicles come closer, the pupils of the eyes normally become smaller to shut out excess light. This reflex keeps you from being blinded by the glare of the headlights. When the lights have passed, the pupils enlarge again to let in all available light.

After a few drinks, this reflex action is impaired. The pupils do not become smaller quickly as the headlights approach, and they are slow to open after the bright lights pass. As a result, the driver can be temporarily blinded and may continue to have blurred vision for some time afterward.

**Blurred vision** After excessive drinking, a person might see multiple images. Each eye normally picks up a separate image of an object. These two images are coordinated by the brain so that the person sees only one image. After several drinks, however, coordination of the images becomes impaired. When driving, the person might see numerous images of a roadway centerline or of traffic signs.

**Depth perception** Alcohol impairs depth perception as well. The drinking driver may misjudge the distance of oncoming or cross-traffic

vehicles, and actually see a vehicle farther away than it actually is. In addition, drivers who drink cannot accurately determine the speed or distance of approaching vehicles. These drivers even lose the ability to judge their own speed or stopping distance.

**Peripheral vision** Drinking also affects peripheral vision, narrowing it so the driver must turn and look to the sides for potential problems. Thus not only is the driver unable to avoid hazards, the driver actually becomes a hazard.

**Physical Effects of Alcohol** As alcohol enters the part of the brain that controls muscular movements, reflexes and balance begins to slow down. A driver who has been drinking alcohol may recognize a dangerous situation but the brain takes longer to process the information and react to the danger. Muscular coordination becomes slow and clumsy. A driver impaired by alcohol might oversteer, brake late, or accelerate suddenly.

As a person continues to drink, the center of the brain that controls breathing and heartbeat can become impaired. If a large amount of alcohol is consumed in a short period of time, the drinker becomes unconscious and death may follow. Long-term use of alcohol can lead to **alcoholism**, an addiction to alcohol.

Abusing alcohol or drinking inappropriately not only causes problems for drivers, but also has the potential to create problems for families and communities.

## Alcohol in the Body

The amount of alcohol detected in a person's bloodstream is called **blood-alcohol concentration** (BAC). The level of intoxication is determined by the percentage of alcohol in the bloodstream. Beer, wine, and liquor can be thought of as "drinks." In standard sizes, all drinks have about the same amount of alcohol, as shown in **FIGURE 3**.

The word *proof* describes the strength of liquor. By dividing liquor's proof number by two, you can determine its approximate percentage of alcohol.

**Factors Affecting BAC** The percentage of alcohol in the bloodstream depends on the amount of alcohol consumed, the period of time (over which) alcohol is consumed, and body weight.










## WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

**Peer Pressure** You and your friend are at a party. Although you're not drinking, you notice that your friend is drinking. You know she is driving home after the party. What would you say to your friend?





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AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL IN STANDARD DRINKS				
Drink volume		Percentage of Alcohol		Amount of Alcohol
 12 ounces beer	×	 5%	=	 0.60 ounces
 5 ounces wine	×	 12%	=	 0.60 ounces
 1½ ounces whiskey (80 proof)	×	 40%	=	 0.60 ounces

The more a person drinks, the higher the BAC. A person's BAC rises more rapidly if less time elapses between drinks. If other factors are equal, a heavier person may be affected less by the same amount of alcohol than a person who weighs less.

To a lesser degree, some types of food in the stomach may make a difference in the rate of absorption of alcohol. However, even with food in the stomach, the absorption rate of alcohol into the bloodstream is rapid. When alcohol is mixed with carbonated beverages, the rate of absorption is even faster.

The safest decision a person can make about drinking alcohol is to abstain entirely.

## Controlling Impairment





Alcohol is absorbed in the bloodstream very quickly but is slow to leave it. Alcohol continues to circulate throughout the body until the liver oxidizes it. The body rids itself of alcohol at a rate of about three fourths of a standard drink per hour.

After consuming three drinks in one hour, a person needs more than four hours to oxidize and eliminate most of the alcohol. Remember, only time can reduce the body's BAC and a person's degree of impairment.

## Fact or Fiction?

► *Drinking black coffee, taking a cold shower, or exercising can make a drunk person sober.* **FICTION** These activities do not reduce BAC. The person may seem more alert but the BAC is not reduced.

FIGURE 4

The Time It Takes for the Body to Rid Itself of Alcohol		
Number of Drinks	BAC Range	Approximate Time to Eliminate Alcohol
	0.02–.03	1½ hours
	0.04–.06	3 hours
	0.06–.09	4 to 5 hours
	0.08–.12	5 to 7 hours
*The number will vary depending on the alcohol content of the drinks and rate of consumption.		

If you drink faster than your body can eliminate the alcohol you've consumed, your BAC rises and eventually you will get drunk.



FIGURE 5

This woman has had several drinks at a party and now she's ready to go home.

### Apply Understanding

Is there a way the woman can lower her BAC more quickly so that she can drive home within the hour?

► *One drink won't hurt.* **FICTION** Taking one drink can make it easier to take a second and third drink.

► *Beer will not make me drunk.* **FICTION** One 12-ounce can of beer contains as much alcohol as an average cocktail.

► *Driving is easier after a few drinks.* **FICTION** Consuming alcohol diminishes your driving abilities.

► *Young people cannot become problem drinkers.* **FICTION** Young people can become problem drinkers even as teenagers. There is no age limit to becoming an alcoholic.

## Reducing Driving Risk

As a responsible driver, you can help reduce the risk of drinking and driving.

One way to reduce the risks of drinking and driving is to appoint a person to be a **designated driver**. The designated driver decides not to drink in order to stay sober so that he can drive without impairments.

Although you are a responsible driver, your friends may decide to drink and drive. Responsible friends can encourage friends to limit their drinking by getting them involved in other activities, encouraging them to decide on a limit of drinks in advance, asking them to avoid drinks with a high concentration of alcohol, encouraging them to sip a drink slowly so that they don't consume more than one alcoholic drink per hour, and making them aware of their behavior.



## izing data

### Alcohol Concentration

Alcohol concentration (BAC) is a measure of the amount of alcohol in the blood per 100 mL of blood. A BAC of 0.1 percent means that one tenth of the fluid in the blood is alcohol.

The graph shows the relative risk of being involved in a fatal crash as a result of the driver's BAC. Study the graph before you answer the following questions.

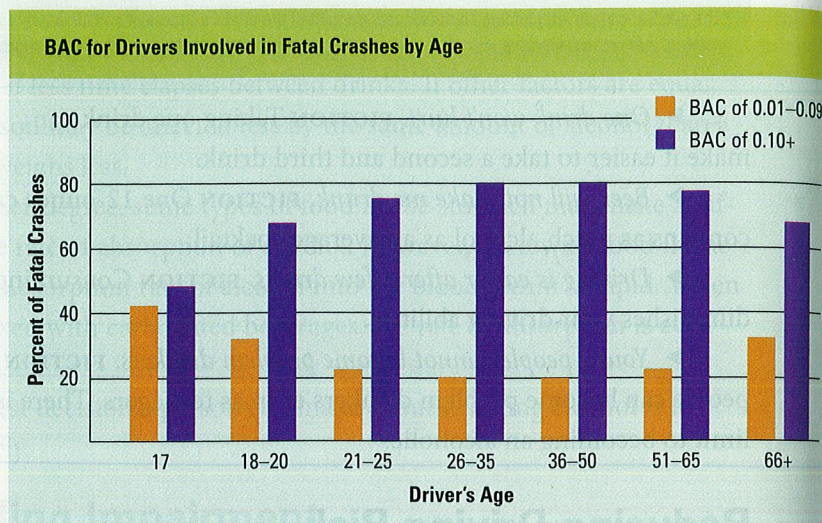
**Interpreting Graphs** What does each bar on the graph represent?

**Analyzing Data** What trends do you see in the number of fatal crashes by age 17 to age 66+ based on the two ranges of BAC?

**Drawing Conclusions** Are young drivers less affected by alcohol than older drivers? Why do you think younger drivers in fatal crashes are less likely to have a BAC of 0.10 or more?

**Inferring** How does the consumption of alcohol affect the risk for the average driver?

**Forming Judgments** To minimize crashes and fatalities due to drunk driving, what do you think should be the legal limit of blood alcohol concentration for drivers?



## view it 7.1

What are some mental effects that alcohol can have on a driver who has been drinking? What are the physical effects?

What is BAC and what relationship does this have to a driver's driving abilities?

What factors can affect a person's BAC?

What are some common myths and facts about alcohol?

### Critical Thinking

- 5. Relate Cause and Effect** In order for one's BAC to rise, what has to occur?

#### IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**Alcohol-Related Crashes** Visit your local law enforcement agency to get data for all reported crashes that were alcohol related for the past five years. Then compare your state's data for the same years. Share your findings with the class.

## Lesson 7.2

### OTHER KINDS OF DRUGS AND DRIVING

Besides alcohol, there are many other types of drugs, legal and illegal. When used properly, most legal drugs have a positive effect. However, even medicines designed to be beneficial can cause hazardous driving situations.

### Types of Drugs

Most drugs are classified according to the effects they have on the central nervous system and bodily functions. Some drugs depress, or slow down, the central nervous system. Other drugs stimulate, or speed up, the central nervous system. When legal drugs are taken as directed, they are relatively safe. However, any drug can become dangerous if it is taken in excess, combined with other drugs, or misused or abused.

**Over-the-Counter Medicines** Drugs that are available without a doctor's prescription are called **over-the-counter medicines**, or OTCs. Many OTCs have side effects that can cause drowsiness, dizziness, slowed reaction time, and poor judgment.

When buying any medicine, read the label for warnings that could affect driving. Check with a pharmacist if you are not sure of labeling or possible side effects. Be sure to tell the pharmacist about any other medicines you might be taking in order to prevent possible drug interactions that can magnify side effects or pose a health threat.

**Prescription Medicine** Drugs that cannot be purchased without a doctor's order, or prescription, are called **prescription medicines**. The law requires that drugs that have serious side effects or are potentially addictive be dispensed only under a physician's direction and guidance.

**Depressants** A **depressant** is a class of drugs that depress, or slow down, the central nervous system. Depressants such as alcohol, barbiturates, sleeping pills, and tranquilizers are taken to relieve tension, calm nerves, or even treat high blood pressure.

A driver using depressants can become very relaxed, uninhibited, and less able to identify, predict, decide, and execute activities.



### OBJECTIVES

- Explain the difference between over-the-counter medicine and prescription medicine.
- Explain how depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogenic drugs affect a driver.
- Describe the effects of combining alcohol with other drugs.



### VOCABULARY

- over-the-counter medicine
- prescription medicine
- depressant
- stimulant
- synergistic effect



## YOU KNOW?

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**Stimulants** A **stimulant** is a drug that speeds up the central nervous system. Amphetamines are a type of stimulant. At first, stimulants create a feeling of high energy and alertness; however, once the feeling of alertness wears off, the driver quickly becomes very tired.

Some people misuse stimulants in order to stay awake while driving for long periods of time. Unfortunately, stimulants can create high-risk situations once the immediate effect wears off.

**Hallucinogens** Hallucinogens are unpredictable, mind-altering drugs that can alter personality and cause panic or terror because they distort a person's sense of direction, distance, and time. Driving while under the influence of hallucinogens creates potentially deadly situations.

Marijuana is another powerful, mind-altering drug that affects the brain and other parts of the central nervous system. Marijuana can impair judgment, memory, depth perception, and coordination. A person who uses marijuana may think that the effects of the drug have worn off after a few hours, but in reality, driving abilities may be impaired for a very long time.

## Combining Drugs

You should not take more than one prescription or over-the-counter medicine at the same time without consulting your doctor or pharmacist. In particular, alcohol and medicine are a potentially dangerous combination. If a person drinks alcohol while taking an antihistamine for a cold, for example, the central nervous system is slowed down much more than taking each by itself. When other drugs are combined with alcohol, the effects of both drugs can be multiplied. This is known as a **synergistic effect**.

## view it 7.2

How does the purchase of over-the-counter medicines differ from the purchase of prescription medicines?

What effects do depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens have on a driver?

What effect would combining alcohol with one or more other drugs have on a person's driving ability?

### Critical Thinking

- Analyze** All medicines are either over-the-counter or prescription. Why are some over-the-counter medicines not out on the shelves and readily available to all customers?

### IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**Read Carefully** Read the labels for the different medicines that you and others you live with commonly use. How many of the labels indicate warnings about driving? Compare your findings with your classmates.



## Lesson 7.3

# TRAFFIC LAWS GOVERNING THE USE OF ALCOHOL



### OBJECTIVES

- Explain what is meant by the implied consent law.
- Describe zero tolerance levels of impairment, and tell how impairment can be detected and measured.
- Explain what actions a driver should take when stopped by a police officer.



### VOCABULARY

- illegal *per se* laws
- implied consent law
- zero tolerance law
- dram shop law
- driving while intoxicated (DWI)
- driving under the influence (DUI)
- operating while impaired (OWI)
- field sobriety test
- nystagmus

All 50 states have become uniform in requiring a person to be 21 years of age to purchase or consume alcoholic beverages. In an effort to further reduce alcohol-related collisions and fatalities, all states have set **illegal *per se* laws** establishing BAC levels of 0.08 or greater. Illegal *per se* laws are state laws that make it a criminal offense to operate a motor vehicle

- at or above a specified alcohol concentration in either the blood, breath, or urine; or
- with any amount of a drug, usually a controlled (illegal) substance, in the body.

Alcohol-related vehicle crashes dropped among teenagers after states raised the legal drinking age to 21. Young drivers are less likely than adults to drive after drinking. However, the risk of collision is substantially higher when teenagers drive after drinking.

## Traffic Laws and Alcohol

Every state has an **implied consent law** for drivers. Implied consent means that anyone who operates a motor vehicle automatically consents to be tested for BAC and other drugs if stopped for suspicion of drug use while driving. If the driver does not cooperate with the police officer and refuses to be tested for BAC, the driver's license can be suspended.

Some states have a **zero tolerance law**, which means that if you are a driver under 21 years of age and you have a BAC greater than 0.02 (depending on the laws in your state), you are guilty of breaking the law. Some states have also adopted a policy of "zero tolerance means zero chances," which means drivers under the age of 21 receive harsh penalties for even their first offense.

A person who serves alcoholic beverages to an intoxicated individual may be liable for the damages caused by that individual. This is an example of a **dram shop law**. In some states, a person who serves the alcohol may also be liable for injuries sustained by the intoxicated individual.



Parents, or any adult, who decide to host parties and knowingly provide alcohol to individuals under the age of 21 can be sanctioned under their state's dram shop laws.

## Levels of Impairment

Because research has demonstrated that the vast majority of drivers who have been drinking are significantly impaired at 0.08 percent, the Federal Government encouraged states to adopt a uniform level of 0.08 BAC, and states complied. All states have set a BAC level of 0.08 BAC at which drivers can be charged with **driving while intoxicated (DWI)**, or in some states driving while impaired (DWI).

Some states may use different terminology to describe drivers who are convicted of operating a vehicle above the legal limit. Some might use driving while intoxicated or impaired, others may use **driving under the influence (DUI)** or **operating while impaired or intoxicated (OWI)**.

## Tests for Impairment

Law enforcement agencies place a high priority on enforcing DWI and DUI laws. Several tests, which can be administered in a police station or on the roadside, can be used to evaluate a person suspected of DWI or DUI.

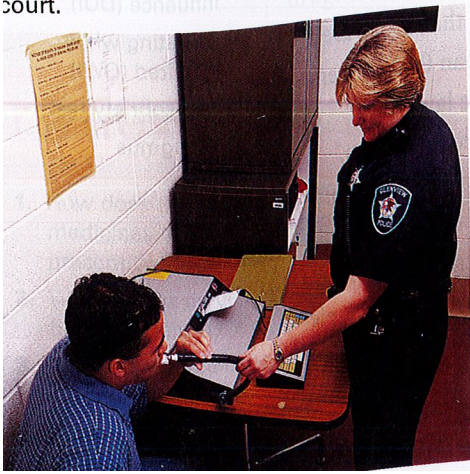
**Chemical Testing** Chemical analysis of blood, urine, or breath can accurately determine BAC. The breath test is a widely used and simple analysis.

The breath-test machine most commonly used for determining BAC is an intoxilyzer. The person breathes into the intoxilyzer tube that determines the BAC. The results of the test are then displayed on both the intoxilyzer screen and a paper printout.

**Field Sobriety Testing** Law officers in many states can give a field sobriety test when they suspect a driver of DWI or DUI. A **field sobriety test** includes a series of on-the-spot roadside tests such as coordination and eye checks that help a police officer detect driver impairment.

FIGURE 6

The intoxilyzer can determine a person's BAC. The results of the test are admissible evidence in court.



One eye-check test is the horizontal-gaze **nystagmus** test, which refers to the involuntary jerking of the eyes as the person gazes to the side. Most people show some nystagmus as their eyes track from straight ahead to the side. The test determines the point where the jerking begins. As a person's BAC level increases, the jerking begins at an earlier point.

Trained officers can accurately estimate a person's BAC to within 0.02 percent of chemical test readings.

Other field sobriety tests can determine both physical and mental impairment. A person's balance, coordination, the ability to follow simple instructions, and the ability to perform two tasks at once may be tested. The inability to perform two tasks at once is called divided-attention impairment.

A simple divided-attention test might require the driver to walk heel to toe a certain number of steps while at the same time giving an oral count of the number of steps taken.

## Penalties for Conviction

The penalties for conviction of driving while intoxicated and driving under the influence involve one or more of the following:

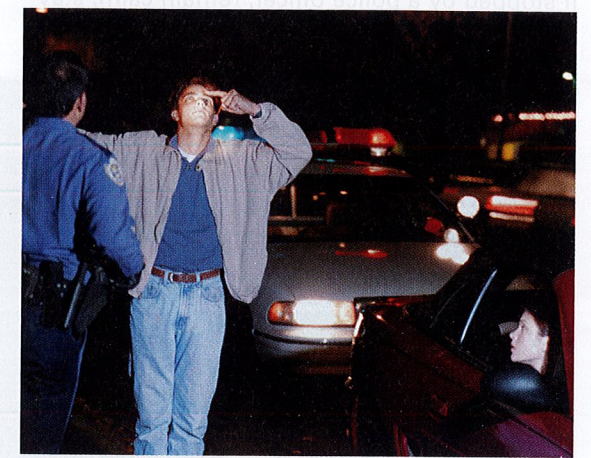
- suspension or revocation of driver's license
- payment of a fine
- serving a prison term
- community service

The most common penalty is suspension of the driver's license for a specified amount of time. Penalties are most severe if an intoxicated driver is involved in a collision. If a fatality results from the collision, the driver could be found guilty of manslaughter or even murder.

Drivers who are convicted of a second DWI or DUI offense usually receive much harsher penalties than for the first conviction. Licenses can be revoked for as long as three years; prison sentences can be longer; and fines can be higher.

FIGURE 7

The police officer has stopped this driver on suspicion of intoxication and is conducting a field sobriety test, a finger-to-nose check.



## DID YOU KNOW?

**Underage Drinking and Driving** If you are under 21 and drive after consuming alcohol, you are breaking two laws. You are breaking the law against underage drinking and the law against driving while under the influence of alcohol.





## If You Are Stopped by a Police Officer

by a police officer, remain calm, stay  
cle, keep hands in plain sight of the  
d follow the officer's directions.



When a driver sees the flashing lights of a police vehicle in the rearview mirror, it is usually a signal to pull over and stop. If you see such a signal, slow your vehicle until you are sure the officer is signaling you. Pull over to the right and stop in a safe place. You might need to pull into a parking lot or a side street out of the way of traffic. Keep your hands visible as the officer approaches.

Stay in your vehicle and follow the instructions the officer gives you. You will be required to show your driver's license, and in states with mandatory insurance laws, you will need to show your certificate of insurance.

## view it 7.3

at is the implied consent law for drivers, and  
at is likely to happen if a driver refuses to  
a BAC test if asked to take one by a police  
er?

at are zero tolerance levels of impairment and  
v can they be measured?

at are two things you should do if you are  
r stopped by a law enforcement officer?

### Thinking

**Key Concepts** Why do you think implied  
sent is not specifically limited to those who  
e received and hold a driver's license?

- Analyze** If drinking under the age of 21 is illegal in all states, why do some state's zero tolerance laws prohibit driving with a BAC level of 0.02 as its level instead of a BAC level of 0.00?

### IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**BAC Testing** What law enforcement agencies are in your area? What BAC testing equipment do they use? Interview a representative from each agency that is responsible for the agency's BAC testing equipment. Find out the cost for each piece of equipment, and how many of each type the department has to use. Share your findings with the class.

People's decisions are influenced by many factors, including pressure from individuals or groups. These influences can create conflicts or uncertainty about decisions that affect a person's future. Many decisions are made based on positive peer pressure or negative peer pressure.

## Understanding Peer Influence and Pressure

Peers greatly influence each other because people naturally want to belong to, and be accepted by, a group. Some of the strongest influences in a person's life are the attitudes and actions of friends and peers.

Peer pressure and peer influence are factors that affect peoples' decisions and actions. **Peer pressure** is an external force that results from peers trying to influence you to do certain things or act a certain way. **Peer influence** is an internal force created out of a desire to be accepted.

**Positive Peer Pressure** When peers exert a pressure on you in a positive way, they want to help and encourage you to do your best and stay safe. Students in **FIGURE 9** are demonstrating positive peer pressure by cheering for their friends.

Talking a friend out of drinking alcoholic beverages at a party or refusing to ride with someone who has been drinking are examples of positive peer pressure. Exerting positive peer pressure on friends can also help strengthen self-esteem in young people because they can see themselves as leaders.

### Negative Peer Pressure

Negative peer pressure occurs when others, who don't have your best interests in mind, encourage you to do something that you believe is wrong or dangerous. For example, friends who tell you that you can drive safely after consuming alcohol are exerting negative peer pressure.

Some people might also



**FIGURE 9**

These girls are cheering for their friend as she races past them.



### OBJECTIVES

- Describe how peer influence and peer pressure might affect a person's decision about drinking and driving.
- List five steps involved in making a responsible decision.
- Explain the meaning of peer education.
- Explain why everyone should share the responsibility of preventing friends from drinking and driving.
- Identify five different ways to say no to peer pressure.



### VOCABULARY

- peer pressure
- peer influence
- peer education



**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Alcohol and Your Body** Your body can only eliminate about ½ ounce of alcohol in one hour. This means that to eliminate one 12-ounce beer or 1 ounce of liquor, it would take your body about two hours. The time varies depending on the gender, weight, and height of a person.

submit to negative peer influence, which occurs when a person feels pressure to use alcohol or other drugs just to fit in with a group. Refusing to do things that you believe are wrong and being able to say no to others are signs of responsible, mature behavior and positive peer influence.

**Peer Refusal Skills**

Refusal skills are all about being able to say no. Knowing ahead of time why, when, and how to say no empowers you and others who hold similar beliefs not to be pressured and to say no.

Sometimes, it's easy to say no, and other times it's not so easy. The desire to be accepted is strong, but when the influence being exerted upon you involves what you believe to be a bad decision with short- or long-term negative consequences, knowing different ways to say no empowers you to be a responsible person.

Different situations call for different ways to say no. Below are some examples of ways you can say no, especially when you are facing negative peer pressure.

**Use Humor** A joke can change the tone of things if you feel the conversation is too serious. Humor also helps to change the direction or focus of the peer pressure being exerted upon you.

**Walk Away** Say no and walk away, or just walk away from the person or people trying to engage you in behavior that is not in your best interest.

**Ask a Question** Say no and then rephrase the suggestion as a question. For example, you might say, "No. Why would I want to risk not being able to get my driver's license?"

**Repeat No** Keep saying no. It can buy you time to consider another response. The more you say no, the easier it is to reaffirm your position.

**Avoid the Situation** If you know your friends will be trying to influence you to do something you think is wrong or do not want to do, avoid situations where they have the chance to exert their pressure and influence.

**Ignore the Pressure** Don't respond when asked to participate in hazardous behavior. Divert your attention or start a conversation with someone else.

**Prepare Reasons** Have a reason for saying no and share that reason. You could say, "I signed a contract with my parents agreeing not to drink, and I need to honor that agreement."

**Provide Alternatives** Suggest an alternative activity to the irresponsible behavior being suggested.

**Use Teamwork** Team up with others who feel the same way you do and who will support you when you say no. Sometimes having others around you who will say the same thing makes saying no a little easier.

**Be Firm** If all else fails, firmly say, "No, thanks!" in such a way that the other person understands that you will not be persuaded to do anything dangerous or against your values.

It takes time, effort, and practice to fully develop different and effective refusal skills. The more you plan ahead and practice, the easier it becomes to apply refusal skills effectively. You want to be accepted by your peers, as we all do, but keep in mind that you have the right and a responsibility to yourself, your family and loved ones to say no when faced with negative pressure to put yourself in danger.

**Making Responsible Decisions**

Learning how to make responsible decisions can help you be more in control of your life. Following the five steps listed in **FIGURE 11** will help you make responsible decisions.

Each person must make his or her own decision whether or not to drink alcohol. The best decision is to choose not to drink. However, as a nondrinker, you must share the concern and care about people who drink and drive.

Although people hesitate to interfere in other people's lives, most people wisely realize that they are being caring friends when they prevent friends from driving after drinking.

**Student Programs**

Underage drinking is a national problem with many causes and no simple solutions. Many schools have student

**FIGURE 10**

You are walking home from school and you see your friend's car parked nearby. Besides your friend, there are two other people in the car nearby who you don't know. As you walk over to talk to your friend, someone extends a beer to you.

**Refusal Skills** What are two ways you could say no?





# PS FOR MAKING RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS

a decision is needed.

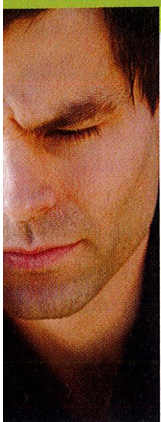
e choices.

e consequences and ask yourself these questions:

ould my parents and other family members think?  
ow respect for myself and others?

ch choice is best.

ur decision to know if it was a responsible one.



considerate listener. Peer leaders learn specific skills such as communication and problem solving in order to help others deal effectively with problems through activities that develop cooperation, trust, support and confidence.

Many schools have developed programs through the assistance of other organizations to help influence people about the harmful effects of alcohol as well as the problem of drinking and driving, including Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM), and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD).

## ew it 7.4

do peer pressure and peer influence differ?  
might peer pressure influence your decision  
nk and drive?

are the five steps for making responsible  
ions?

should everyone share the responsibility of  
etting friends drive after drinking?

### hinking

/ Concepts Why is it a good idea for young  
le to develop more than one way to say no?

programs that educate students on how to combat underage drinking. Communities also offer support and education programs to combat drinking.

**Peer Education** **Peer education** is a process in which young people help other young people make decisions and determine goals. Peer programs may be known by many other names, including peer counseling, peer mentoring, or peer helpers.

Many young people are more sensitive to the thoughts and opinions of their peers than to the thoughts and opinions of adults. Peer groups have properly trained peer leaders who can be more than a friend or a

### IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**Is It Worth the Risk?** Does your state or city have sanctions against underage individuals being at a party where alcohol is present and being consumed? Interview a local police officer to find out. Then create a chart listing the potential sanctions for underage individuals attending such a function.

## CHAPTER 7 REVIEW

### Lesson Summaries

#### 7.1 EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON DRIVING SAFELY

- A person's BAC is affected by the amount of alcohol consumed, the time over which alcohol is consumed, a person's body weight, and the presence (or lack) of food in the stomach.

#### 7.2 OTHER KINDS OF DRUGS AND DRIVING

- Drugs can cause a driver to lose inhibitions and can impair judgment, memory, depth perception, and coordination.
- Combining alcohol with other drugs often results in synergistic effects, which means the effects are multiplied.

#### 7.3 TRAFFIC LAWS GOVERNING THE USE OF ALCOHOL

- Anyone who operates a motor vehicle is assumed to have given consent to a BAC test.
- If an officer signals you to stop, slow down, pull over, and stop as soon as it is safe to do so.

#### 7.4 COPING WITH PEER PRESSURE

- To make a responsible decision, consider your options and consider the consequences before you decide.



#### STUDY TIP

Make flash cards for all the vocabulary words. On the back of each card, write the definition. With a partner, quiz each other on the meanings of the words and then offer one example for each definition. Take turns.

## Chapter Vocabulary

- |                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • alcoholism                        | • inhibitions                    |
| • blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) | • intoxicated                    |
| • depressant                        | • nystagmus                      |
| • designated driver                 | • operating while impaired (OUI) |
| • dram shop law                     | • over-the-counter medicine      |
| • driving under the influence (DUI) | • peer education                 |
| • driving while intoxicated (DWI)   | • peer influence                 |
| • euphoria                          | • peer pressure                  |
| • field sobriety test               | • prescription medicine          |
| • illegal <i>per se</i> laws        | • stimulant                      |
| • implied consent law               | • synergistic effect             |
|                                     | • zero tolerance law             |

Write the word or phrase from the list above that completes the sentence correctly.

1. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is a drug that tends to slow down the central nervous system.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ requires a doctor's permission to obtain.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the amount of alcohol in a person's blood, expressed as a percentage.
4. The forces of personality that restrain a person's impulsive behavior are called \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The involuntary jerking of the eyes as a person gazes to the side is called \_\_\_\_\_.
6. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is an effect that often results when taking two or more medications or drugs.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ are laws that state if a person has a BAC over a certain amount, they are legally impaired.