

arrive alive
DRIVE SOBER



SEMPER SAFE

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“Designated Driver Program”

The month of April is nationally recognized as Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month. Drinking only one or two drinks is positive aspect of being responsible, but it does not mean you are still okay to drive. The best way to protect yourself and your money is to have a Designated Driver. In 2010, more than 10,000 people died in alcohol impaired driving crashes; one every 51 minutes. Alcohol impaired motor vehicle crashes cost more than an estimated \$37 Billion annually according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Designated drivers have saved nearly 50,000 lives and spared many more thousands from injury. Each year, millions of Americans either serve as designated drivers or are driven home by one. Since the 1980s, designated driver programs aimed at reducing alcohol impaired driving have been widely implemented and promoted in the United States. Designated driver programs are simple, voluntary, inexpensive, and easily applicable to a variety of situations.

What is a “Designated Driver”? A designated driver is an adult who is legally licensed to drive, who agrees to refrain from all alcohol consumption, and who safely transports any group members home. Designated drivers should be appointed prior to the consumption of alcohol to prevent anyone from being tempted to drive. A designated driver can be used anywhere people ride together after drinking alcohol, including private homes, bars, sporting events, restaurants or office parties. Designated drivers are also important when someone is taking medication that makes them drowsy or otherwise impaired and not fit to drive. Designated drivers help family and friends avoid embarrassment, keep their driving license, stay out of jail, and most importantly prevent senseless injury or death.

Unfortunately, according to recent studies, an alarming small percentage of designated drivers in the United States ***completely refrain from consuming alcohol***, and many people apply the designated driver concept in ways that are unsafe. For example, some believe that the designated driver can drink alcohol as long as they stop drinking a few hours before driving or stay under the legal limit of 0.08 BAC. Another example of an unsafe act is when the designated driver does not refrain from drinking alcohol and an alternative driver is chosen based on who in the group is the least intoxicated. Given these attitudes and practices, it is not surprising that many young Marines and Sailors consume some alcohol when acting as the designated driver or choose to get in the car with someone who has been drinking.

Commanders and Supervisors: The Marine Corps lost 31 personnel in private motor vehicle accidents in FY12, 7 directly related to alcohol! While not all of these mishaps were alcohol related, still we must combat this problem through driver safety education, high-visibility law enforcement and other proactive command safety initiatives to deter individuals from making the fatal decision to drink and drive. One of the most effective safety initiatives to prevent these accidents is through the use of a unit designated driver program or “Arrive Alive Program” which has saved countless careers and more importantly lives.

As Marines, Sailors and Civil Servants we live by our core values. So think before you jeopardize the safety of yourself, your fellow Marines, Sailors, civilian employees or family members, and remember SEMPER SAFE