

MAY 2012: WE'RE #1 AGAIN: LOWEST DRUNK DRIVING DEATHS IN U.S.

A dynasty in sports is a team that dominates their sport for multiple years. When you think of sports dynasties you may think of the New York Yankees who won 16 World Series in 29 years from 1936 to 1964. In basketball you may think of the Boston Celtics who won 11 NBA championships in 13 years from 1957 to 1969 or UCLA winners of 10 NCAA men's basketball championships in 12 years from 1964 to 1975. In football you may think of the Pittsburgh Steelers who won 4 Super Bowls in 6 years from 1973 to 1979 or the San Francisco 49ers winners of 4 Super Bowls in 9 years from 1981 to 1989.

Utah has a dynasty, not in sports, but in having the lowest percent of traffic deaths in the U.S. due to drunk drivers. If there was a championship for having the lowest percent of deaths due to drunk drivers, then Utah would have won it 14 of the last 16 years (1995-2010). A greater run than any of the above sports dynasties.

Utah Rankings

Utah had the lowest percent of deaths due to drunk drivers for every year from 1995-2010 except 2004 and 2008. In 2008, Vermont had the lowest rate at 16.4% narrowly beating Utah's rate of 16.7%. In 2004, Vermont had the lowest rate at 20.4% followed by Iowa at 23.3% and Utah at 23.6%. In 1994, South Carolina had the lowest rate at 24.6% followed by Utah at 26.7%.

Utah Rankings for Lowest Percent of Deaths Involving a Drunk Driver	
Year	Rank
2010	1
2009	1
2008	2
2007	1
2006	1
2005	1
2004	3
2003	1
2002	1
2001	1
2000	1
1999	1
1998	1
1997	1
1996	1
1995	1
1994	2

Worst State for Drunk Driving

While Utah had the best rate at 19%, North Dakota had the worst rate at 45% of deaths involving drunk drivers. If Utah had the same percent of deaths from drunk drivers as North Dakota, then there would have been an additional 62 deaths from drunk drivers in Utah. A listing of the best and worst five states follows.

2010 State Rankings for Drunk Driving		
Rank	State	% Deaths from Drunk Driving
1	Utah	19%
2	Oregon	22%
3	Kentucky	23%
4	Iowa	23%
5	Maine	24%
	U.S. Rate	31%
46	Montana	39%
47	Kansas	39%
48	Texas	42%
49	South Carolina	44%
50	North Dakota	45%

Who are the drunk drivers?

Drunk drivers are overwhelmingly male (84%). In regards to age, the largest age group of drunk drivers were 25-34 years (40%). Drivers under age 21 years accounted for 12% of drunk drivers in fatal crashes. There is a rapid decline of drunk drivers as age increases with no drunk drivers in fatal crashes over age 60 years. In addition 16% of drunk drivers in fatal crashes had been previously convicted of driving under the influence in the past three years.

When do drunk driver crashes occur in Utah?

While drunk driver crashes occur throughout the day, nearly two-thirds (63%) of drunk driver fatal crashes occurred between 7:00 p.m. and 4:59 a.m. Saturday and Monday were the days of the week with the highest number of drunk driver fatal crashes.

How drunk are drunk drivers in fatal crashes in Utah?

The legal limit to drive is a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) under .08 grams per deciliter. Over half (56%) of the drunk drivers in fatal crashes had BAC levels at or

above twice the legal limit. One-fifth (20%) had BAC levels three times above the legal limit.

Who gets killed in drunk driver crashes in Utah?

Over the past 10 years (2001-2010), 373 people have been killed in drunk driver crashes. Drunk drivers accounted for 59% of the deaths. Passengers of the drunk driver were an additional 22%. Occupants of another vehicle accounted for 15% of the deaths and 4% of the deaths were to bicyclists/pedestrians.