

Traffic Safety Facts

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The 2006 National Labor Day Impaired Driving Crackdown: *Over the Limit. Under Arrest.*

Background

NHTSA's 2006 national impaired driving high-visibility enforcement program was based on previous findings that well-publicized and highly visible enforcement can reduce alcohol-related crashes, fatalities and injuries. NHTSA modeled the national 2006 Labor Day holiday campaign on the successful national program to increase seat belt use. The seat belt program, Click It or Ticket (CIOT), included short-duration, intensive law enforcement, supported by paid and earned media that emphasized heightened enforcement efforts and was a proven method to raise seat belt use within a short period of time. The 2006 impaired driving program of enforcement and media occurred during the Labor Day holiday period. National advertisements carried the slogan, *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.*

The crackdown placed particular emphasis on young adult males between 18 and 34, a demographic over-represented in impaired driving crashes. The centerpiece of the paid media effort included a national television advertisement showing young adult males being arrested for driving drunk. The 2006 effort encompassed 18 consecutive nights of intensive driving while intoxicated (DWI) enforcement beginning August 18, 2006. Enforcement used high-visibility DWI check-points and saturation patrol techniques.

Evaluation Methods

NHTSA completed process and outcome evaluations of the impaired driving crackdown. Paid and earned media data were collected from NHTSA's national media contractors, the Tombras Group and AkinsCrisp Public Strategies. Data included the dollars spent on the national advertisement purchase, the number of news events, and the stories captured and counted by news clipping services. State-by-State activity data were reported using NHTSA's Web-based system, www.mobilizationsdata.com. States reported dollars spent on media types (television, radio, billboard, and newsprint) and details of local law enforcement agency efforts over the course of the 2006 Labor Day holiday campaign.

Additional evaluation sources included the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data (2001-2006), which were examined for annual trends in DWI arrests. Data from NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) was used to analyze trends in alcohol-related fatalities.

Two national, random sample telephone surveys were conducted by M. Davis and Company, Inc., the first prior to the crackdown and the second immediately after the campaign's conclusion. A second set of national, random sample telephone surveys were conducted surrounding end-of-year 2006 activities by TMR, Inc.

Results

NHTSA and the States (20 States reporting) spent over \$18 million on the Labor Day advertisement campaign. Enforcement efforts implemented concurrently with the paid advertisement campaign resulted in over 40,000 arrests. Comparing 2006 to 2005, UCR data indicated higher annual DWI arrest rates in 26 of the 49 States providing data, whereas the rates in 3 States remained unchanged, and the rates decreased in 20 States. Nearly 8,500 State and local law enforcement agencies participated in the 2006 Labor Day holiday enforcement blitz.

National telephone survey results indicated that the media effort reached the general public and the 18- to 34-year-old age group in particular. Several survey items indicated that the 2006 Labor Day holiday campaign heightened awareness of law enforcement efforts to arrest intoxicated drivers. For example, respondents were asked if they had seen or heard of any special effort by police in their community to reduce driving under the influence or driving drunk in the past 30 days. Figure 1 shows that there was a significant increase in awareness of enforcement activity after the campaign for all respondents and for the targeted 18-to-34 male driver group. Over two-thirds of overall participants reported drinking alcohol, and nearly a quarter admitted to some level of drinking and driving (see Figure 2). A higher proportion of young respondents indicated

drinking and driving in the past 30 days. The proportion of respondents that reported drinking and driving measured lower in the post-wave. Only 4% of the general respondents reported driving when they thought they had too much to drink and drive safely in the past 30 days, and that did not change over time.

Figure 1. Seen or heard about DWI enforcement in past 30 days

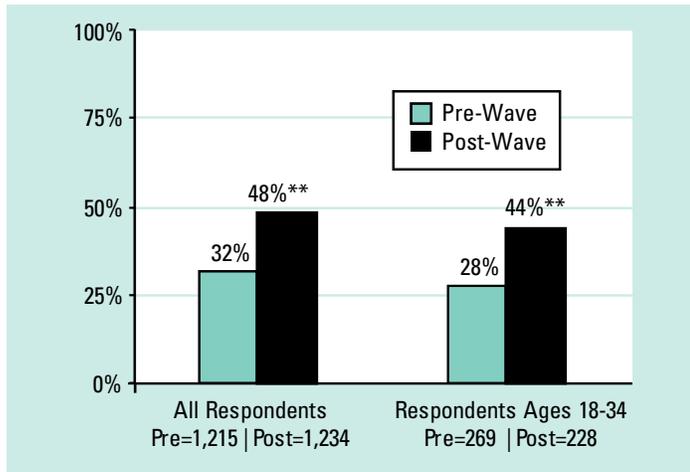
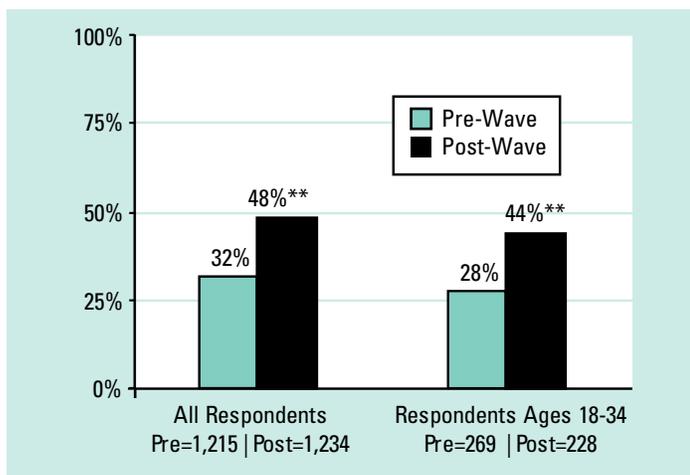
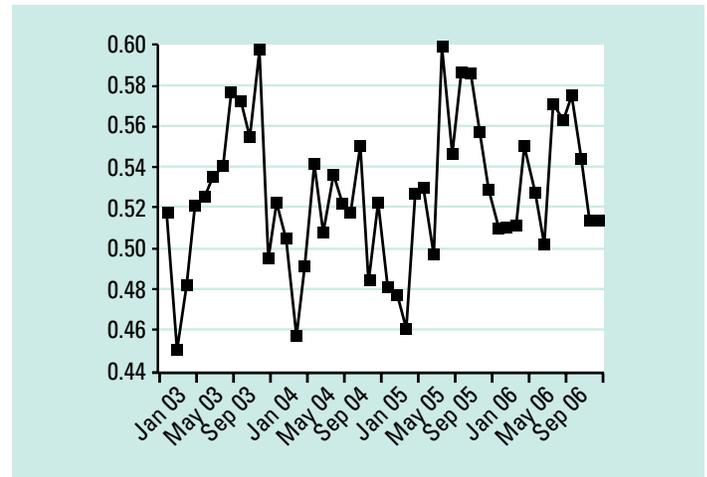


Figure 2. Reported drinking & driving in past 30 days.



Despite the clear increase in awareness that resulted from the 2006 impaired driving crackdown, FARS data indicated only a small decrease in the number of fatally injured drivers having positive blood alcohol concentrations in that age range from 2005 to 2006. Figure 3 shows trends in alcohol-related crashes from 2003 to 2006.

Figure 3. Alcohol-Related Crashes per 100k VMT January 2003 – December 2006



Case Studies of 8 States

Accompanying the evaluations are case studies that documented recent efforts in eight States with high-visibility enforcement programs. The case studies are descriptions of programs coupled with data that show recent progress in Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

Conclusion

Enforcement and media were core elements for the nationwide effort coordinated under NHTSA’s direction for the Labor Day holiday period in 2006. Nearly one-third of national awareness survey respondents said they were “likely” to be stopped if they were driving while impaired by alcohol at the end of the campaign; an increase from 27 to 32%. However, the percentage of respondents who said they drove after drinking too much in the past month remained unchanged at 4%.

Sustained enforcement throughout the year is needed to reduce impaired driving. Reductions in alcohol-related crashes may require concentrated, intense, and unrelenting enforcement month after month.

How to Order

Download a copy of *The 2006 National Labor Day Impaired Driving Crackdown: Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest* (113 pages) from NHTSA.dot.gov, or write to the Office of Behavioral Safety Research, NHTSA, NTI-130, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590, fax 202-366-7394.

