

Risky behaviors drivers engage in despite knowing the dangers

According to a recent study conducted by the AAA (American Automobile Association) Foundation for Traffic Safety, drivers who were involved in crashes within the last two years are more likely to engage in risky driving behavior, despite being aware of the consequences.

The foundation's annual Traffic Safety Culture Index found that many drivers perceived speeding, aggressive driving, distracted driving, and impaired driving as dangerous. Researchers surveyed 2,714 drivers ages 16 and older in the fall of 2019.

Drivers admit to risky behavior

About 96 percent of those involved in the study considered drowsy driving and texting "extremely or very dangerous." Yet, many drivers in the study engaged in at least one of these behaviors within 30 days of being surveyed.

For drivers who were recently involved in crashes, the number of risky driving behaviors were much higher. What's worse, many of these drivers do not improve their driving behavior after a crash.

The study found:

- 50% admitted to talking on a cellphone within the past month in comparison to 42% who were not involved in crashes.
- 43% admitted to texting and driving within the past month in comparison to 27% who were not involved in crashes.
- 39% admitted to running a red light within the past month in comparison to 30% who were not involved in crashes.
- More than 40% were aware of the risk of getting caught by police for sending or reading text messages.

In comparison to similar data collected in 2018, the recent AAA study found a slight decrease in risky driving behaviors. For example, talking on cellphones fell by about nine percent and drowsy driving and texting fell by about three percent.

Avoiding risky driving behaviors

To help prevent crashes caused by risky driving behavior, AAA offers the following suggestions to drivers:

- Drivers should place cellphones out of reach or disable calling, texting and other features while driving.

- Drivers should allow themselves more time when traveling and never underestimate the danger of speeding.
- Drivers should get off the road when they experience drowsy driving, take a short rest, or avoid driving altogether.
- Drivers should never get behind the wheel while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, recreational drugs, or certain over-the-counter medications.
- Seatbelts should always be worn.

If you or a loved one was injured in a crash with a driver who engaged in risky behavior, our law firm can take legal action on your behalf. Contact us to find out how we can help you get the compensation you deserve.

How does California's dram shop law work?

In most states, bars, liquor stores, restaurants and other establishments can be held accountable when they serve minors or impaired people who then cause someone's injury or death. Dram shop laws allow injured people to file claims against these establishments or social hosts who have contributed to a drunk driving crash.

If you were involved in a drunk driving crash, it's important that you first understand how California's dram shop laws work and who they apply to.

Who does California's dram shop law apply to?

Unlike many other states, California's dram shop law is lenient. Establishments and social hosts are not liable for injuries caused by adult patrons.

Under California Civil Code section 1714, only establishments and social hosts who serve minors can be held accountable when an injury or death occurs. This applies when a minor who was served alcohol:

- Causes a traffic collision and injures or kills another road user
- Causes someone's injury inside or outside an establishment

Establishments and social hosts are responsible for ensuring that minors are

not served alcohol. They often break their obligation when:

- They value profit over safety
- Staff isn't trained to check IDs
- Establishment owners, staff or social hosts simply don't care to check IDs

If you were injured in a crash with a drunk driver, you will need a strong legal advocate who can launch a thorough investigation. For help with your drunk driving car accident claim, contact us for a free and confidential case evaluation.



How to stay safe when riding a bicycle

Bicycle sales have risen sharply amid the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Bloomberg. With California gyms and fitness clubs currently closed, many people are turning to cycling to keep fit and stay healthy.

Bicyclists often share the road with cars and trucks. This puts them at risk of encountering distracted drivers, speeders, aggressive drivers, impaired drivers, and drivers who dislike bicyclists.

Furthermore, bicyclists are among the most vulnerable road users. They don't have the same protections as motorists: seatbelts, airbags, crash mitigation technology or a car frame.

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Bicycle safety tips from AAA

There are ways bicyclists can stay safe and reduce the likelihood of being seriously injured. Here are some tips offered by AAA:

- **Pay attention to your surroundings:**

Be sure to check both directions when entering a new roadway or approaching an intersection. Never go ahead until the coast is clear.

- **Always wear a helmet:** By wearing a properly fitted helmet, you can have an 85 percent less chance of sustaining a serious traumatic brain injury.

- **Travel in direction of vehicular traffic:**

Always ride on the right side of the road in the same direction as vehicular traffic.

- **Avoid congested areas:** Areas where traffic congestion is heavy can be dangerous for bicyclists. Unless a protected bicycle lane is available, it's best to stay away from these areas and find an alternate route.

- **Signal with your hands:** For bicyclists, hand signals work the same way as turn signals do in cars.

- **Make yourself visible:** It's important to wear bright clothing to make yourself more visible to drivers.

- **Be careful of road defects and debris:** You may encounter potholes, large cracks in the road, uneven surfaces, and debris. Be sure to keep an eye out for these hazards and avoid them.

Should you or a loved one be injured in a bicycle crash, contact us for a free case evaluation.

