

The growing problem of driving under the influence and measures to try and stop i...

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Driving under the influence is a matter that has become very prominent in the last 20 years. Statistics show that every 90 seconds, someone is injured because of this entirely preventable crime (Blincoe, Seay and Zaloshnja). Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finds that almost 30 people in the United States are killed daily because of individuals driving under the influence. This amounts to about one death every 48 minutes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). This is a total of 31% of all motor vehicle fatalities (Responsibility.org). No one should be seriously injured or killed from the mistakes of irresponsible individuals-driving under the influence is 100% preventable. Action needs to be taken in order to significantly, if not completely, reduce the number of innocent lives affected by those driving under the influence. Many agree that there is no action else that can be taken; however, there are several logical arguments that will help subdue this dilemma.

Considerable action has already been taken in order to lessen the effects of driving under the influence. Since 1980, the year Mothers Against Drunk Driving was founded, the number of deaths caused by driving under the influence has been cut in half (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). However, there is much more that can be done. In fact, Mothers Against Drunk Driving's main goal is to completely eradicate driving under the influence (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). In actuality, this will never happen, at least not for now, but it is a goal we can attempt to reach.

There are several ways in order to reduce the amount of driving under the influence. The first major reduction starts at the individual level. If one was

to go drinking, it is important to always have a trusted individual such as a friend or family member who will be the “designated driver”. Another, albeit radical, method to reduce driving under the influence would be to install an ignition interlock device in every single car. Another method would be to increase the number of sobriety checkpoints on major roadways. Lastly, by either increasing the penalties for driving under the influence or lowering the legal limit for Blood Alcohol Concentration, we could possibly further decrease the occurrence of driving under the influence.

The simplest way to prevent driving under the influence is to not drive while drinking-this guarantees an individual his or her own safety and the safety of others around them. However, this may be difficult for some irresponsible individuals as they do not plan out in advance to initiate a designated driver for the night. To resolve this problem, places serving alcoholic beverages should require a party of people to designate a driver when entering a venue. The individual designated would not be allowed to be served alcohol and must maintain order within his or her party. However for some single entrants, this is not possible. In a single person scenario, one should be required to hire a taxi or use any similar service to prevent driving under the influence. One of the most popular of these services is BeMyDD. BeMyDD is a company that specializes in reducing the amount of driving under the influence. Their motto is, “We Drive Your Car, So You Don’t Have To” (BeMyDD). This allows an individual to drive to the venue of their choice, partake in as many alcoholic beverages as they are able, and arrive for both the individual and their car to be safely driven home. The only downside to

these types of services is they are fairly expensive compared to a taxi. However, by driving your own car to the venue, you are able to save significant money and the price becomes more comparable to a taxi.

Another way to prevent driving under the influence is the installation of ignition interlock devices on all vehicles owned in the country. However, this is extremely expensive and immoral as it infringes upon the rights of those who are legally driving. However, there are automatic in-car ignition interlock devices in development. Jan Carlson, the CEO of the company Autoliv who is developing these devices states, “[they] should be seamless. [One] should not notice the car has an alcohol detection device in it” (Gibbs). There are similar systems in newer automobiles that detect if a person is tired or has fallen asleep that act on a similar principal. These systems have saved numerous lives by alerting the driver. However, the addition of yet another computerized system in a vehicle will logically increase the sale value of the car, but if these systems become standardized then the increase in cost will be insignificant. However, if the automatic in-car ignition interlock devices are effective, then the increased cost would be justified.