

NTSB suggests lowering legal drinking limit to 0.05 percent

Written by Australian Business

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In New Jersey and across the country, the legal drinking limit for motorists is a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 percent -- a limit that was established nationwide in 2000. At the time, states were encouraged to adopt the standard, as funds for highway construction would have been withheld if they failed to do so.

Now, the National Transportation Safety Board is recommending that the legal limit be reduced further, in an effort to decrease the number of fatalities caused by drunk driving accidents each year. The NTSB has recommended that states lower the legal BAC to 0.05 percent. Based on data from the government, those with a BAC of 0.05 percent have a 38 percent increased likelihood of causing a drunk driving accident than those who have refrained from consuming alcohol. In comparison, those with a 0.08 percent BAC are 169 percent more at risk of causing an auto accident.

The NTSB estimates that lowering the legal drinking limit would result in 500 to 800 fewer drunk driving fatalities in the United States annually.

Nevertheless, some have questioned whether the lower standard would have a significant impact on drunk driving collisions. Consequently, a researcher at the University of Iowa is currently conducting a study to determine the potential effects of such a reduction. The study will examine how those with a 0.05 percent BAC are affected while operating a vehicle by using a driving simulator.

Avoid a dangerous drunk driving accident in New Jersey

Despite strict drunk driving laws in New Jersey, such collisions continue to be a serious problem. According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, there were 193 fatalities caused by drunk driving accidents in the state last year. In total, 31 percent of all traffic fatalities in New Jersey were caused by drunk drivers in 2012.

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These statistics are reflective of the nation as a whole, as well. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 10,000 people died in drunk driving collisions in the United States in 2010. As in New Jersey, these fatalities accounted for 31 percent of all traffic fatalities that year.

When someone suspects that an individual is too intoxicated to get behind the wheel, it is wise to take action to prevent him or her from driving. Arranging for alternate transportation, such as a taxi, and taking the keys away from the intoxicated individual is a helpful first step.

If you or a loved one has been injured in a motor vehicle accident caused by a drunk driver, seek the advice of a knowledgeable personal injury attorney to ensure your rights are protected.