

Bicyclist DUI Survey
Prepared by the Bicycle Transportation Alliance

- 1. Bicyclists are extremely concerned about drunk driving and feel it unfairly endangers more vulnerable citizens (bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as children and the elderly). Many bicyclists are limiting their biking because of their fears.**

"Drunk drivers are the #1 threat to my safety on a bicycle."

"Impaired driving is one of my top worries. It's the variable that makes all the preparation I put in (taking a reasonable route, being well-lit, using reflective gear, mirrors, etc.) at the mercy of someone else's inability to control their consumption of intoxicating substances."

"I'm deeply concerned about drunk driving, and the potential for myself and my other bicycling (and pedestrian) friends to be injured or killed. It's inexcusable that we as a society turn such a blind eye toward the hazards of drunk driving."

"I'm very concerned. Drunk drivers are my top worry when cycling at night."

"I've had three friends die in the last ten years from drunk drivers, so I think it is a HUGE problem! I've also had first-hand experience watching cops hawk over Critical Mass riders and hand out tickets and arrest people. To me the enforcement priorities have been way out of balance. I think the degree of enforcement should be relative to the danger that is posed, and I don't think CM in its entire cumulative history in Portland has posed as serious a danger as ONE drunk driver."

"I am most concerned about drunk driving in that it means there are people on the road who are entirely unpredictable. I have a friend who was run over on her bike by a drunk driver. She now walks with a cane and talks by typing into a computerized box she carries with her."

"Drunk driving is a serious problem for bicyclists...sharing the road on [weekend] eves is made extremely dangerous because of DUI risks."

"Drunk driving dramatically increases the risk of death or serious injury to bicyclists (Lindsey Llaneza is a prime example). Drunk drivers' awareness of the illegality of their actions also makes it more likely for them to engage in hit-and-runs, leaving an injured cyclist to die rather than calling for an ambulance."

"I know that I certainly try to be off the streets by "beer thirty" or wait for an hour or so after to go home/out. So, I'd say I'm quite concerned."

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"I try to avoid riding after midnight since this is when I see most of the drunk drivers out. Unfortunately, bus service is often not offered at the later hours to provide an alternative to cyclists who want to get home safely."

"What concerns me the most is that a drunk automobile driver is more apt to flee the scene since their vehicle is still operational, especially if it is late at night when no witnesses are present to call the police."

"When I ride on weekend evenings, I assume all drivers are drunk and I try my best to stay out of their way. When coming home late, especially on Friday/Sat, I stay on side streets, slow down at intersections to make sure they're clear even when I have the right of way, and actually go up on to the sidewalk to avoid cars approaching from behind."

"If I do ride at night I try to pick well lit routes with bike lanes. How about higher fines on DUI drivers that are pulled over along these routes or enhanced patrols along these routes especially in the summer time when more people are out late on their bikes?"

2. Bicyclists have little to no faith in current drunk driving enforcement, punishment and treatment.

"There is a serious problem with intoxicated drivers in the Portland metro, and the system is not resolving it properly."

"Our current legal system is a joke in regard to drunk driving (see Lindsey Llana's record). Cracking down on drunk driving is obviously not a priority of law enforcement."

"Every time I ride home through the city in the 2-3am hour, I see clearly intoxicated drivers. I was taking the side streets from Hawthorne back to my Irvington home a few months back and a fellow swerved in front of me to park on the right side of the street. I stopped and was about ready to make a comment about how he wasn't paying attention when he got out and literally stumbled to the curb and up to his home. No sense talking to him in that condition."

"The way it is now, I think the general consensus is that it's OK to drink and drive (at least a little!) as long as you don't get caught or kill someone. Most people never end up killing someone, but it's the general acceptance of the activity that makes it a problem."

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"The system is not effective! I know so many people who are otherwise ultra responsible, but think nothing of driving home after a few (or even more than a few drinks). One of my friends was stopped a few blocks from his home by an officer. My friend and his wife were pretty drunk, but the officer let him carry on home. My friend thought it was his professional demeanor, humble attitude, and the fact he was only blocks from home that got him off the hook. My friend's a lawyer, and is good at talking his way out of something. But I was furious at that officer- he just reinforced my friend's attitude that HE can get away with it, because HE's not some crazy alcoholic drunk. This friend of mine hasn't changed his behavior one bit since then. If I know hundreds of people who think like this, does that mean there are thousands of them out there on the road? I think so!"

3. Bicyclists support much stricter and intrusive enforcement actions, especially more jail time and checkpoints.

"I would like to see a law similar to California's Three Strikes rule. If you drive drunk three times, you go directly to jail."

"I'm not usually into intrusive police activity, and I don't like innocent people having to be inconvenienced, but in this case I would support checks being set up on weekend nights on streets with lots of bars."

"I would appreciate periodic checkpoints by the police to check for DUII offenders in the evenings. Having lived in states where this was performed, it seemed effective in deterring folks from driving drunk."

"I'd like to see check points set up, and every driver going by being checked out."

"I would like license plates with past offenders to hold a sticker informing the public that the driver has been DUII in the past. As a cyclist, I would be able to avoid riding near these folks."

"If the City spent the same \$2000-3000 per month that they now spend policing Critical Mass and instead focused on targeting drunk drivers, I think our roads would be a lot safer. If cops were assigned to watch over the bar parking lots and approach people to check out their sobriety before they got in their cars, I think this would be a deterrent to drunk driving. I live right near a bar, and I've never seen a cops hover around the parking lot to watch-out for drunk drivers. They sure do hover around Critical Mass though!!"

"There should be a higher price to pay for casual and continued driving

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under the influence. The cost of that behavior shouldn't come AFTER a tragic 'accident'."

"I believe that drunk drivers should be treated like sex offenders and have their name, picture and home address posted online. Their crime, potentially killing people, is no different than murder. "

- 4. Bicyclists particularly feel that the system doesn't view driving with a suspended license as a serious offense, and that unless we actively and effectively prevent repeat offenders from having access to cars, they will continue to drive drunk.**

"Suspending someone's license doesn't stop them from driving, obviously. The majority of cyclists killed by drunk drivers have been from drivers with suspended licenses."

"Most DUII offenders have their license suspended, but that rarely stops them from driving. Their cars (guns) should be confiscated and given to struggling families that need transportation."

"I would advocate for taking away the vehicle that they are driving - not just their drivers license. People can easily and often do drive with a suspended license. If their cars were taken away and auctioned off like drug-offense impounds, the drunk driver would have a harder time finding a vehicle to drive, and the money raised auctioning their vehicle could be used for educational programs."

"For past DUII offenders, the registration of cars, DEQ and license authorities should check more thoroughly for valid licensing, insured motorists, and that they are permitted to drive a vehicle from their arrest history. This is similar to how communities are fighting child predators with all-inclusive society checks to avoid repeat offenders."

"Suspended drivers driving uninsured junker cars are even more likely to flee a scene and don't mind being caught since they'll just go and buy another car. I don't think you should be able to buy a car without showing a valid drivers license."

"We'd like to see laws changed so that their cars are taken away!"

"I support mandatory 'drug-court' style treatment programs. If someone is a serious enough offender, don't just take away the license, take away the car."

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"I support long-term license suspensions for convicted drunk drivers. If a previously-convicted drunk driver is caught driving with a suspended license, that person should receive a mandatory three-day prison sentence for their first offense. The prison sentence would increase dramatically for follow-up offenses. Chronic drunk drivers should be taken off the streets for good - a drunk behind the wheel of a two-ton vehicle is far more dangerous to public safety than a pot dealer."

- 5. Many cyclists also feel that a proactive approach to helping convicted offenders have transportation options will decrease the chances that they will drive in spite of the suspended license.**

"Increase the fine so that it includes a year long Tri-Met pass."

"I'd like us to give them Tri-Met passes while figuring out how to solve their drinking problem. If they get drunk and ride the bus, I'm in no danger."

"Impound the vehicle being driven and reselling it to fund a "free bus pass" program for tipsy folks who leave their keys at the bar willingly."

"Make DUII offenders take a mandatory bicycle training class so that they have an alternative to driving while their license is suspended."

"I'd like to see the first DUII come with a combined full year suspension of license (as in, you don't get it back just for taking a course) and a discount for a bike as alternate transport."

- 6. Bicyclists feel that the consequences of bicycling while drunk are not significant compared to DUII, and in light of the inadequate existing system would not like to see any enforcement resources shifted away from a drunk driving focus.**

"Going after drunken cyclists and pedestrians will have an incredibly immeasurably small effect on public safety. Drunk drivers kill and maim orders of magnitude more than all the bikers and pedestrians combined."

"I hope that law enforcement will devote resources commensurate with the lethal potential of each form of DUII (driving, walking, biking)."

"I am not at all afraid for my life due to a drunk bicyclist, so I wouldn't put effort on any law changes."

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“Any funds taken away from drunk driving to fight drunk biking and drunk walking will only result in the deaths of innocent people. Such a reallocation of resources is not in the interest of public safety.”

“Because the risk of injury is dramatically lessened for both the cyclist and their environment, I'm not interested in seeing energy going towards this issue. It may be akin to "public drunkenness" concerns, to me - an issue that compounds other situations, but not a "first cause" for arrest.”