

11-12-2012

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### Repository Citation

Stinson, Philip M.; Liederbach, John; Todak, Natalie E.; and Brewer, Steven L., "Drunk Driving Cops: A Study of Police Officers Arrested 2005-2010" (2012). *Criminal Justice Faculty Publications*. 47.  
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# Drunk Driving Cops: A Study of Police Officers Arrested 2005-2010

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This project is supported by Award No. 2011-IJ-CX-0024, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this presentation are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

# DUI is a Societal Problem

- Approximately 31% of all traffic fatalities are alcohol-related (NHTSA, 2012).
- 10,759 people were killed in alcohol-impaired driving traffic accidents in 2010 (NHTSA, 2012).
- Over 2.4 million drivers were arrested for DUI in 2009, a figure that represents less than 1% of the 147 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among US adults each year (CDC, 2010).
- An overwhelming majority (>80%) of those who engage in risky driving practices are also self-reported binge drinkers (Chou, 2008).
- More than two-thirds of all DUI offenders can be classified as “hardcore drinking drivers.” Hardcore drinking drivers are at particularly high risk of being involved in an alcohol-related traffic accident (Simpson, et al., 1996; Voas and Fisher, 2001, p. 33).

# Police and Drinking

- Research suggests that policing is especially conducive to alcohol problems and alcohol abuse among officers. Studies suggest that up to 25% of officers have serious alcohol problems (Dishlacoff, 1976, Carter and Stephens, 1988).
- Police scholars have characterized police culture as "essentially a drinking culture" (Lindsay and Shelley, 2009, pg. 88; see *also* Violanti, 1999).
- Alcohol problems among officers manifest in a number of ways including, absenteeism, insubordination, citizen complaints, misconduct, intoxication during working hours, traffic accidents, and reduced productivity (Swanson et al., 2008).
- About 1 in 4 agencies responding to the CSLLEA 2008 survey were willing to consider applicants with a prior conviction for DUI. Nearly 9 in 10 agencies with 100 or more officers had such a policy (Hickman, 2012).
- Drunk driving by off-duty police officers is generally tolerated by other cops.

# Method

- Part of a larger study on police crime.
- Content analysis of news articles.
- Use Google News search engine and Google Alerts email update service.
- The larger study identified 5,230 criminal cases involving the arrest of 4,445 sworn officers during the years 2005-2010.
- The arrested officers were employed by 1,999 nonfederal agencies in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- This study focuses on the identification and description of the subset of cases where officers were arrested for DUI.
- Intercoder reliability: overall simple agreement between two coders across all variables of interest in this study is 97.44%.

**Table 1. Police DUI Cases: Arrested Officers and Agencies (N = 782)**

	<i>n</i>	(%)		<i>n</i>	(%)
Sex			Agency Type		
Male	722	(92.3)	Primary State Police	36	(4.6)
Female	60	(7.7)	Sheriff's Office	135	(17.3)
Function			County Police Dept.	42	(5.4)
Patrol & Street Level	624	(79.8)	Municipal Police Dept.	546	(69.8)
Line/Field Supervisor	120	(15.3)	Other Dept.	23	(2.9)
Management	38	(4.9)	Agency Size (Full-Time Sworn Officers)		
Officer Duty Status			0-24	121	(15.4)
On-Duty	106	(13.6)	25-99	178	(22.7)
Off-Duty	676	(86.4)	100-999	280	(35.9)
Age			1,000 or more	203	(26.0)
20-27	99	(12.7)	Region of Agency		
28-35	184	(23.5)	South	320	(40.9)
36-43	220	(28.1)	Midwest	206	(26.3)
44-51	107	(13.7)	Northeast	146	(18.7)
52 or older	34	(4.3)	West	110	(14.1)
missing	138	(17.6)	Urban-Rural Code		
Years of Service			Metro County	678	(86.7)
0-5	208	(26.6)	Non-Metro County	104	(13.3)
6-11	143	(18.3)	Arresting Agency		
12-17	112	(14.3)	Employing Agency	221	(28.3)
18 or more years	115	(14.7)	Another Agency	561	(71.7)
missing	204	(26.1)			

**Table 2. Police DUI Arrest Cases: Most Serious Offense Charged (N = 782)**

	<i>n</i>	%
Driving Under the Influence	665	(85.0)
Simple Assault	27	(3.5)
Weapons Offense	20	(2.6)
Aggravated Assault	18	(2.3)
Murder / Nonnegligent Manslaughter	16	(2.0)
Destruction of Property / Vandalism	12	(1.5)
Negligent Manslaughter	11	(1.4)
Drug / Narcotic Offense	4	(0.5)
Nonviolent Family Offense (Child Endangerment)	4	(0.5)
Intimidation	1	(0.1)
Forgery	1	(0.1)
Impersonation	1	(0.1)
Prostitution	1	(0.1)
Indecent Exposure	1	(0.1)

**Table 3. Police DUI Arrest Cases: Incident Events (N = 782)**

	<i>n</i>	%
DUI Traffic Accident	416	(53.2)
DUI Traffic Accident with Injuries	191	(24.4)
Refused BAC Test	153	(19.6)
DUI Traffic Accident: Officer Fled Scene	91	(11.6)
Officer in Possession of Firearm while DUI	71	(9.1)
DUI Traffic Accident: Officer Charged with Hit-and-Run	65	(8.3)
DUI in Take-Home Police Vehicle	64	(8.2)
Off-Duty: Identified Self as Police Officer	60	(7.7)
Refused Field Sobriety Tests	57	(7.3)
Officer Resisted Arrest	41	(5.2)
DUI Traffic Accident: Fatality Resulting	40	(5.1)
DUI <i>Actually</i> On-Duty in Police Vehicle	37	(4.7)
DUI in Police Vehicle while Out of Jurisdiction	27	(3.5)
DUI Traffic Accident: Flipped their Car	26	(3.3)
Officer's Employing Agency Requires 24/7 Availability	21	(2.7)
Off-Duty: Flashed Badge	15	(1.9)
DUI Traffic Accident: Driving a Motorcycle	14	(1.8)
DUI Traffic Accident: Driving in Wrong Direction	11	(1.4)
DUI Traffic Accident: Officer Denied Driving	11	(1.4)
Off-Duty: Displayed Police Weapon	10	(1.3)
Off-Duty: Family Violence	8	(1.0)
DUI Traffic Accident: While Evading	6	(0.8)
DUI Traffic Accident: Flipped Victim's Car	5	(0.6)
Off-Duty: In Police Uniform	1	(0.1)
Off-Duty: Made an Arrest	1	(0.1)
Off-Duty: Intervened in Existing Dispute Pursuant to Policy	1	(0.1)

Note: Categories are not mutually exclusive. Table does not equal 100%.



**Table 4. Police DUI Arrest Cases: Drug-Related** (*N* = 782, *n* = 35)

	<i>n</i>	%	Valid %
Specific Drugs:			
Other Depressants (Depressant)	11	(1.4)	(42.3)
Oxycodone (Narcotic)	6	(0.8)	(23.1)
Hydrocodone (Narcotic)	4	(0.5)	(15.4)
Benzodiazepines (Depressant)	4	(0.5)	(15.4)
Cocaine (Stimulant)	4	(0.5)	(15.4)
Marijuana (Cannabis)	3	(0.4)	(11.5)
Hydromorphone (Narcotic)	2	(0.3)	(7.7)
Other Narcotics (Narcotic)	2	(0.3)	(7.7)
Amphetamine/Methamphetamine (Stimulant)	2	(0.3)	(7.7)
Other Stimulants (Stimulant)	2	(0.3)	(7.7)
Codeine (Narcotic)	1	(0.1)	(3.8)
MDMA & Analogs (Hallucinogen)	1	(0.1)	(3.8)
Other Anabolic Steroids (Anabolic Steroid)	1	(0.1)	(3.8)
Unknown Prescription Drug (Police Vehicle)	6	(0.8)	(23.1)
Unknown Prescription Drug (POV)	3	(0.4)	(11.5)
Arrested Officers and Agencies:			
Officer is Male	33	(94.3)	
On-Duty at Time of DUI Offense	14	(40.0)	
Arresting Agency is Not Officer's Employer	25	(71.4)	

Note: Categories are not mutually exclusive. Table does not equal 100%.

**Table 5. Police DUI Arrest Cases: Bivariate Associations Examining Loss of Job & Conviction**

<i>N</i> = 782	Retained Job		Lost Job		$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%				
State where employed (51 categories)	544	69.6	238	30.4	92.598	50	<.001	0.344
Age at arrest (6 categories)	544	69.6	238	30.4	27.396	5	<.001	0.187
Full-Time Officers (10 categories)	544	69.6	238	30.4	22.924	9	0.006	0.171
Urban to Rural County (9 categories)	544	69.6	238	30.4	21.581	8	0.006	0.166
DUI Accident: Fatality Resulting	21	52.5	19	47.5	10.337	3	0.016	0.158
Years of Service (4 categories)	544	69.6	238	30.4	18.501	4	0.001	0.154
Metropolitan County	486	71.7	192	28.3	10.783	1	0.001	0.117
Ordinance On-Duty 24 hours a day	21	100.0	0	0.0	8.965	1	0.003	0.115
Discussion of Scandal / Cover-up	45	88.2	6	11.8	8.982	1	0.003	0.107
DUI Accident: Victim's vehicle flipped	1	20.0	4	80.0	4.648	1	0.031	0.106
DUI Accident: Driving Wrong Direction	4	36.4	7	63.6	4.26	1	0.039	0.101
Violence-related DUI	33	54.1	28	45.9	7.476	1	0.006	0.098
Injuries in DUI-related Traffic Accident	118	61.8	73	38.2	7.235	1	0.007	0.096
DUI-related Traffic Accident	273	65.4	143	34.4	6.518	1	0.011	0.091
Official Capacity	64	59.8	43	40.2	5.568	1	0.018	0.084
Reassigned to another Position	83	79.0	22	21.0	5.151	1	0.023	0.081
<hr/>								
<i>N</i> = 301	Not Convicted		Convicted		$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%				
State Where employed (47 categories)	59	19.6	242	80.4	71.525	46	0.009	0.487
Reassigned to another position	17	34.0	33	66.0	7.888	1	0.005	0.162
DUI-related Traffic Accident	25	14.6	146	85.4	6.234	1	0.013	0.144
Demoted in Rank	5	50.0	5	50.0	6.065	1	0.014	0.142
Officer Refused BAC Test	18	31.0	40	69.0	5.959	1	0.015	0.141
Ordinance On-Duty 24 hours a day	0	0.0	21	100.0	5.121	1	0.024	0.140
DUI in Take-Home Police Vehicle	10	34.5	19	65.5	4.51	1	0.034	0.122
Injuries in DUI-related Traffic Accident	10	11.9	74	88.1	4.38	1	0.036	0.121

**Table 6. Police DUI Arrest Cases: Logistic Regression Model Predicting Loss of Job (*N* = 637)**

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>	Exp(B)	95% CI for Exp(B)	
						<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
DUI was Violence-Related	.626	.304	4.252	.039	1.870	1.031	3.390
DUI-related Accident Fatality	.623	.247	6.360	.012	1.865	1.149	3.027
DUI committed in Official Capacity	.570	.238	5.737	.017	1.769	1.109	2.820
DUI-related Traffic Accident	.360	.182	3.910	.048	1.433	1.003	2.047
County Urban-Rural Continuum	.204	.066	9.612	.002	1.226	1.078	1.395
Full-Time Sworn Personnel	-.089	.043	4.358	.037	.915	.842	.995
Articles mention Scandal resulted	-1.055	.522	4.082	.043	.348	.125	.969
- 2 Log Likelihood	761.593						
Model Chi-Square	50.248			<.001			
Cox & Snell <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.076						
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.105						
AUC	.619						

**Table 7. Police DUI Arrest Cases: Logistic Regression Model Predicting Conviction ( $N = 301$ )**

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>	Exp(B)	95% CI for Exp(B)	
						<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
DUI-related Traffic Accident	.802	.310	6.678	.010	2.229	1.214	4.095
Refused BAC Test	-.682	.347	3.875	.049	.505	.256	.997
DUI in a Take-Home Police Vehicle	-1.068	.450	5.648	.017	.344	.142	.829
Reassigned after DUI arrest	-1.090	.359	9.236	.002	.336	.167	.679
- 2 Log Likelihood	274.256						
Model Chi-Square	23.629			<.001			
Cox & Snell $R^2$	.075						
Nagelkerke $R^2$	.120						
AUC	.682						

JobLostBinary

Category	%	n
No	69.6	544
Yes	30.4	238
Total	100.0	782



State  
Adj. P-value=1.000, Chi-square=88.060, df=4

OH; IN; MN; CA; NY; LA; CT; NJ; AZ;  
WA; KY; NV; IA

Category	%	n
No	81.7	228
Yes	18.3	51
Total	35.7	279

DUI Accident: Fatality  
Adj. P-value=0.003, Chi-square=8.551, df=1

MA; SC; MI; NM; NC; VA; OK; AL;  
DC; NE; UT

Category	%	n
No	53.1	86
Yes	46.9	76
Total	20.7	162

Years Service  
Adj. P-value=0.006, Chi-square=13.022, df=1

FL; IL; TX; CO; TN; PA; AR; MD; ME;  
KS

Category	%	n
No	65.4	157
Yes	34.6	83
Total	30.7	240

Years Service  
Adj. P-value=0.000, Chi-square=23.306, df=1

WI; RI; WY; MT; ND; WY; DE; OR;  
MS; ID; HI; AK

Category	%	n
No	96.8	60
Yes	3.2	2
Total	7.9	62

GA; MO; SD; NH; VT

Category	%	n
No	33.3	13
Yes	66.7	26
Total	5.0	39

No

Yes

<= 1.0

> 1.0; <missing>

<= 13.0

> 13.0; <missing>

Category	%	n
No	83.3	220
Yes	16.7	44
Total	33.8	264

Age  
Adj. P-value=0.040, Chi-square=15.978, df=2

Category	%	n
No	53.3	8
Yes	46.7	7
Total	1.9	15

Category	%	n
No	11.8	2
Yes	88.2	15
Total	2.2	17

Category	%	n
No	57.9	84
Yes	42.1	61
Total	18.5	145

Age  
Adj. P-value=0.025, Chi-square=16.884, df=2

Category	%	n
No	51.2	64
Yes	48.8	61
Total	16.0	125

official capacity vs individual capacity  
Adj. P-value=0.016, Chi-square=5.771, df=1

Category	%	n
No	80.9	93
Yes	19.1	22
Total	14.7	115

Metropolitan  
Adj. P-value=0.002, Chi-square=9.861, df=1

<= 28.0

(28.0, 34.0]

<missing>

> 34.0

<= 36.0

> 36.0

<missing>

this crime was committed by officer in their individual capacity

crime was committed by officer in their official capacity

Metropolitan

Non-Metropolitan

Category	%	n
No	74.3	26
Yes	25.7	9
Total	4.5	35

Category	%	n
No	95.7	89
Yes	4.3	4
Total	11.9	93

Category	%	n
No	77.2	105
Yes	22.8	31
Total	17.4	136

violent vs nonviolent  
Adj. P-value=0.001, Chi-square=10.833, df=1

Category	%	n
No	60.4	32
Yes	39.6	21
Total	6.8	53

Metropolitan  
Adj. P-value=0.029, Chi-square=4.754, df=1

Category	%	n
No	38.9	21
Yes	61.1	33
Total	6.9	54

Category	%	n
No	81.6	31
Yes	18.4	7
Total	4.9	38

Category	%	n
No	56.4	57
Yes	43.6	44
Total	12.9	101

Category	%	n
No	29.2	7
Yes	70.8	17
Total	3.1	24

officer was reassigned to another position in the agency  
Adj. P-value=0.005, Chi-square=7.900, df=1

Category	%	n
No	84.6	88
Yes	15.4	16
Total	13.3	104

Category	%	n
No	45.5	5
Yes	54.5	6
Total	1.4	11

this crime is nonviolent

this crime is violent

Metropolitan

Non-Metropolitan

Category	%	n
No	97.7	84
Yes	2.3	2
Total	11.0	86

Category	%	n
No	71.4	5
Yes	28.6	2
Total	0.9	7

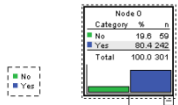
Category	%	n
No	67.4	29
Yes	32.6	14
Total	5.5	43

Category	%	n
No	30.0	3
Yes	70.0	7
Total	1.3	10

Category	%	n
No	15.8	3
Yes	84.2	16
Total	2.4	19

Category	%	n
No	80.0	4
Yes	20.0	1
Total	0.6	5

case disposition: officer was convicted of crime



officer was reassigned to another position in the agency Improvement#0.017

