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# Drunk Driving Cops: A Study of Police Officers Arrested 2005-2010

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# 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 $R^2$	.076						
Nagelkerke $R^2$	.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>

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

<= 13.0

> 13.0; <missing>

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

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

<= 36.0

> 36.0

<missing>

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

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	56.4	57
Yes	43.6	44
Total	12.9	101

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

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

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

