

State of

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**Drunk Driving
Fatalities in America**

2009

THE
CENTURY COUNCIL

DISTILLERS FIGHTING DRUNK DRIVING & UNDERAGE DRINKING

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DISTILLERS FIGHTING DRUNK DRIVING & UNDERAGE DRINKING

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Overview

The Century Council was founded in 1991 and is an independent, national not-for-profit organization headquartered in Arlington, Virginia. Funded by America's leading distillers – Bacardi U.S.A., Inc.; Beam Global Spirits and Wine, Inc.; Brown-Forman; Constellation Brands, Inc.; DIAGEO; Hood River Distillers, Inc.; Pernod Ricard USA; and Sidney Frank Importing Co., Inc. – the Council is dedicated to developing and implementing innovative programs and public awareness campaigns that fight drunk driving and underage drinking. An independent Advisory Board of distinguished leaders in business, government, education, law enforcement, medicine, and other relevant disciplines assists the Council and its members in its efforts.

Since The Century Council's inception, we have been a leader in the fight to eliminate drunk driving and underage drinking and promoting responsible decision making regarding beverage alcohol. Our funding companies have demonstrated their support of the Council's mission by investing nearly \$200 million dollars in programs, research and initiatives to fight drunk driving and underage drinking – two of society's top safety concerns. Over this period of time alcohol-impaired driving fatalities have declined 32 percent nationally, and 52% among those under 21. Furthermore, we estimate nearly 100,000 lives have been saved on our nation's roads in part due to the role The Century Council has played during this time.

The Century Council believes collective action has a greater impact than individual efforts, and works to involve all sectors of the community including law enforcement, judges, public officials, educators, insurers, health care professionals, government agencies, and advocacy organizations, in this important fight to advance policies and programs to help eliminate drunk driving. While 2009 saw a record breaking decline in alcohol-impaired driving fatalities our work remains unfinished. The average BAC level recorded among drinking drivers in fatal crashes remains at .16, twice the legal limit. Additionally, six out of ten of the alcohol-involved driving fatalities on our roads involved a hardcore drunk driver, who had a BAC level of .15 or higher.

I hope the information provided here not only highlights The Century Council's leadership role in the fight to eliminate drunk driving and underage drinking, but will also serve as a useful resource to those interested in this effort. To find out more about The Century Council's programs and initiatives to fight drunk driving and underage drinking, or for copies of our latest research, please visit our website at www.centurycouncil.org.



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Terminology

ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED FATALITY

Drivers in all 50 states and D.C. are considered to be alcohol-impaired if their blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher. Any fatality occurring in a crash involving at least one driver, or motorcycle operator, with a BAC of .08 or higher is considered to be an alcohol-impaired driving fatality. The term alcohol-impaired does not indicate that a crash or a fatality was the result of alcohol impairment. In producing national and state alcohol-impaired statistics, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates the extent of alcohol involvement when alcohol test results are unknown.

ALCOHOL-INVOLVED FATALITY

Alcohol-involved fatalities are those where at least one driver, or motorcycle operator, has a positive BAC of .01 or higher. In producing national and state alcohol-involved statistics, NHTSA estimates the extent of alcohol involvement when alcohol test results are unknown.

BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION (BAC)

BAC is measured in grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood. A BAC of .01 indicates .01 grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood. As of July 2004, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have enacted legislation establishing a driver with a BAC of .08 to be legally intoxicated. Additionally, 42 states and the District of Columbia have laws and penalties for those who drive with elevated or "high" BAC levels.

HARDCORE DRUNK DRIVERS

Hardcore drunk drivers, those who drive with a high BAC of .15 or above, do so repeatedly, as demonstrated by having more than one drunk driving arrest, and are highly resistant to changing their behavior despite previous sanctions, treatment, or education efforts.

RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION

The rate of alcohol-impaired fatalities per 100,000 population is the number of alcohol-impaired fatalities for every 100,000 persons in the population being measured. For example, an alcohol-impaired fatality rate of 3.5 per 100,000 population nationally means that for every 100,000 people in the nation, there were approximately four alcohol-impaired fatalities.

REPEAT OFFENDERS

The NHTSA/FARS data records prior driving records (convictions only, not violations) for driving while intoxicated events occurring within three years of the date of the crash. The same driver can have one or more of these convictions during this three year period. Drivers who have a prior conviction in this three year period are reported as repeat offenders.

Foreword

The Century Council is pleased to present its annual summary of the *State of Drunk Driving Fatalities in America* for 2009. This synopsis includes graphs that summarize the latest available alcohol-impaired traffic fatality statistics in the U.S. detailed state-by-state as well as more than 20 years of trend data. The report also highlights hardcore drunk driver statistics and the impact these offenders continue to have on our roads according to data collected by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

While vehicle miles traveled in 2009 increased over 2008 levels, the lowest number of driving fatalities in more than a half century was recorded, too. In 2009, 33,808 people died in crashes on our nation's roadways – a decrease of almost ten percent from 37,423 in 2008. Forty-one states and the District of Columbia had reductions in the number of driving fatalities.

In 2009, 10,839 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving a driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher – an average of one fatality every 50 minutes. Alcohol-impaired driving fatalities decreased nearly ten percent from 11,711 in 2008, and even more significantly, declined 49 percent from a high of 21,113 in 1982, when NHTSA first began keeping these statistics. Among those under 21 years of age, 1,398 people were killed in alcohol-impaired driving fatalities, down seven percent from 1,492 in 2008, and 73 percent from the record high of 5,215 in 1982. Alcohol-impaired driving fatalities accounted for 32 percent of all fatal crashes last year.

Similarly, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 population have been declining in the U.S. and among those under 21. In 2009, the alcohol-impaired driving fatality rate per 100,000 population fell to a historic low of 3.5, a decrease of 62 percent since 1982. Among those under 21, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 declined 77 percent from 6.9 in 1982 to 1.6 in 2009. The rate of alcohol-impaired fatalities in the U.S. overall and among those under 21 has decreased in all but a handful of states over the past ten years.

Despite the progress that has been made to make our nation's roads safer, including legislative and vehicle and occupant safety enhancements, the impact of hardcore drunk drivers in fatal crashes has not changed. This dangerous segment of the driving population, the hardcore drunk driver, continues to account for an unequal share of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities each year. In 2009, 70% of drivers involved in a fatal drunk driving crash had a BAC of .15 or higher; the median BAC level remains twice the legal limit at .17. While 44% of drivers involved in a fatal motor vehicle crash had a prior DWI conviction and a BAC level of .15 or higher.

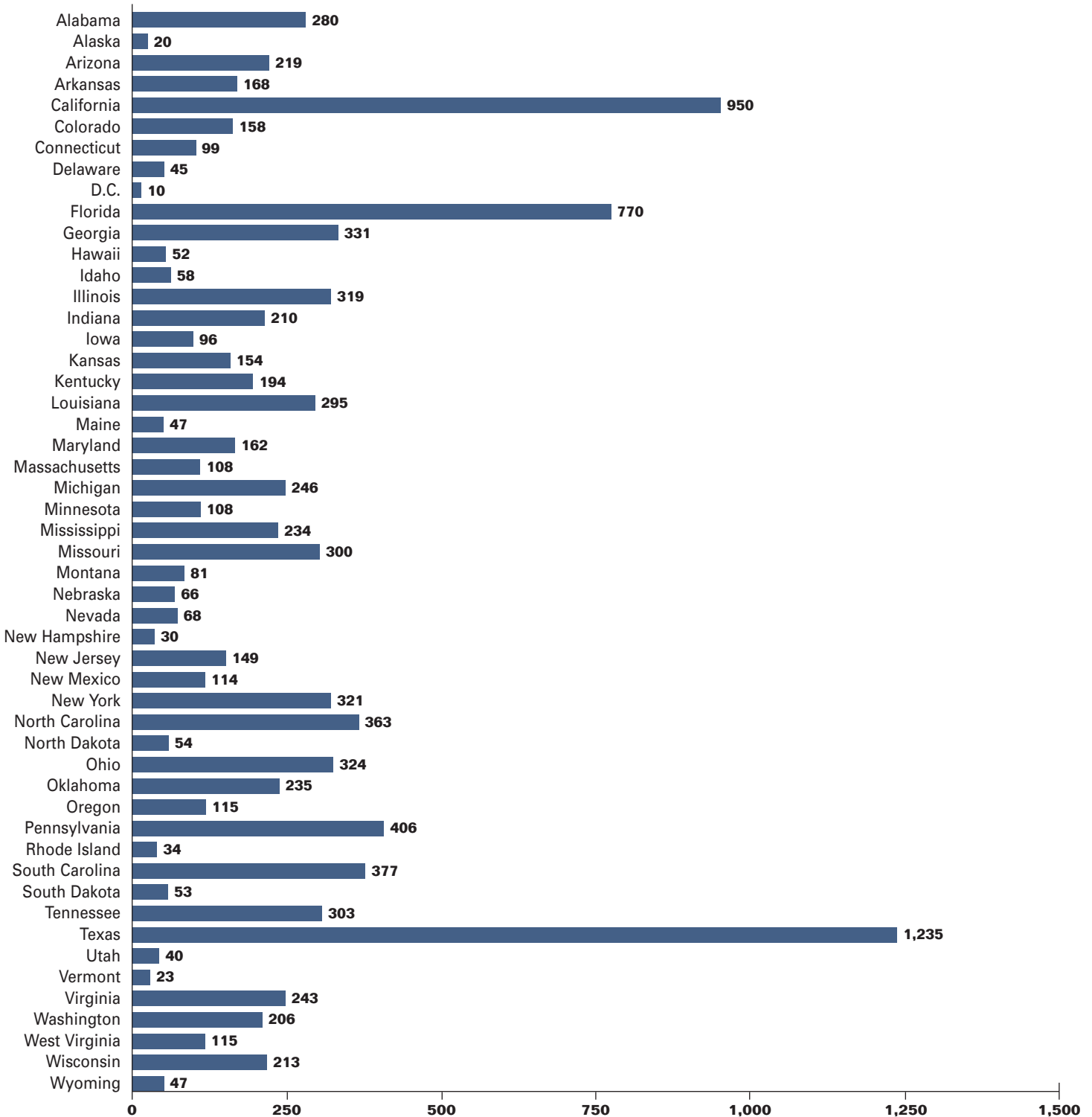
These alarming statistics highlight the fact that no simple solution or single law or one-size-fits-all technology will be solely effective in stopping these most serious DWI offenders. Hardcore drunk driving remains a behavioral challenge and a top priority for The Century Council. The Council, along with Harvard Medical School Division on Addictions, The Cambridge Health Alliance will partner to further search for a new approach to address hardcore drunk driving by developing and testing a computerized assessment and treatment referral system. The end result will create a new offering for judges, prosecutors and probation partners to work together to promote strong, consistent sentencing, creative and comprehensive sanctions, and treatment options that promote behavior changes leading to a lasting reduction of hardcore drunk driver recidivism.

In the meantime, The Century Council will continue its efforts in this important fight to eliminate drunk driving and stands ready to assist law enforcement, judges, legislators, state and federal government agencies, treatment professionals and advocacy groups in this life-saving effort.

The information presented in this report is drawn from several databases maintained by government agencies, including the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) of NHTSA, which compiles crash data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), and the U.S. Census Bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce. This report reflects data from 1982 to the present utilizing NHTSA's *multiple imputation* method for estimating missing information about BAC levels for persons involved in fatal crashes, thus allowing for improved reporting of alcohol involvement statistics at any BAC level. The U.S. Census Bureau publishes state resident population estimates which were used in this report.

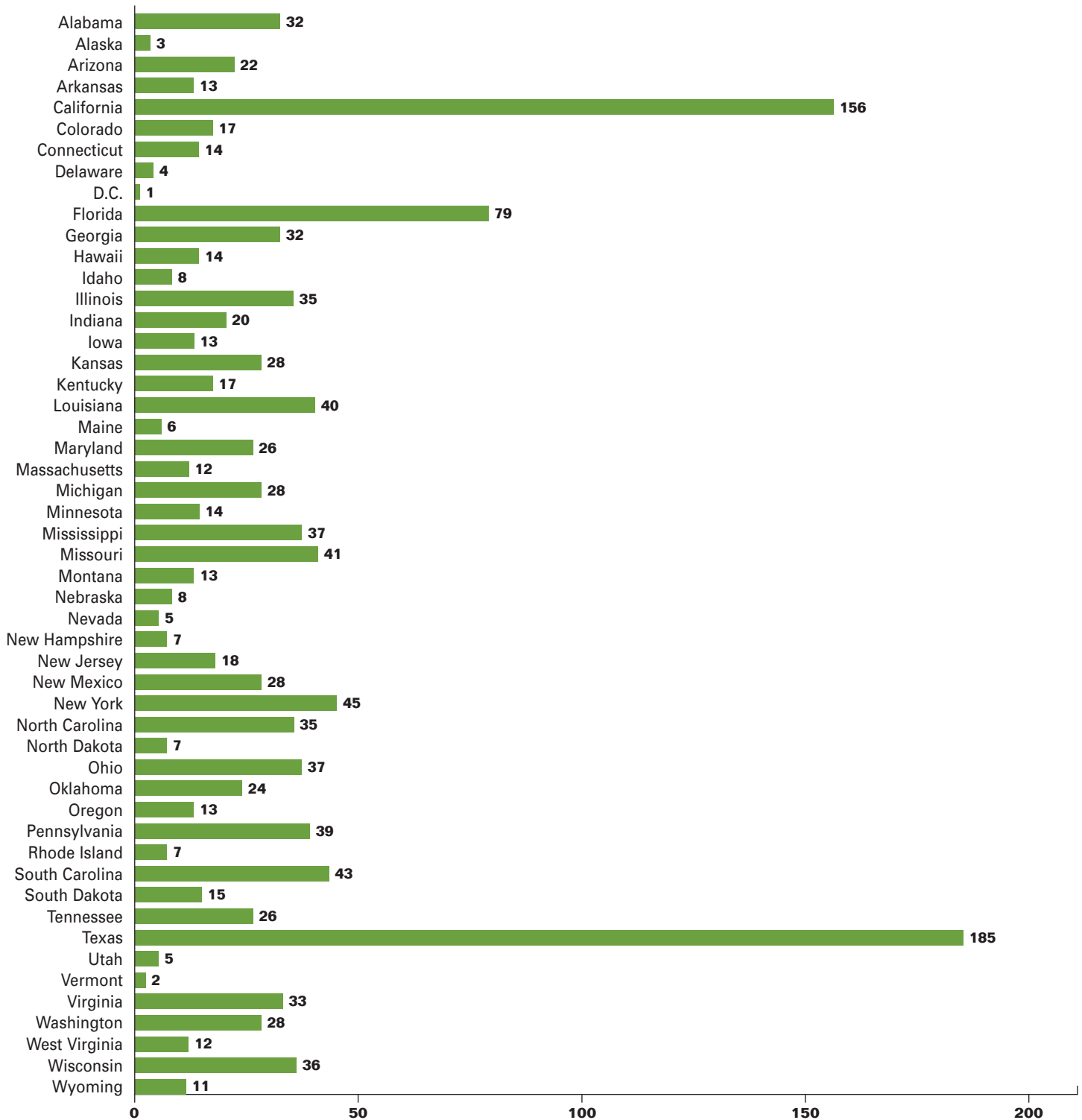
2009 Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities

U.S. TOTAL: 10,839



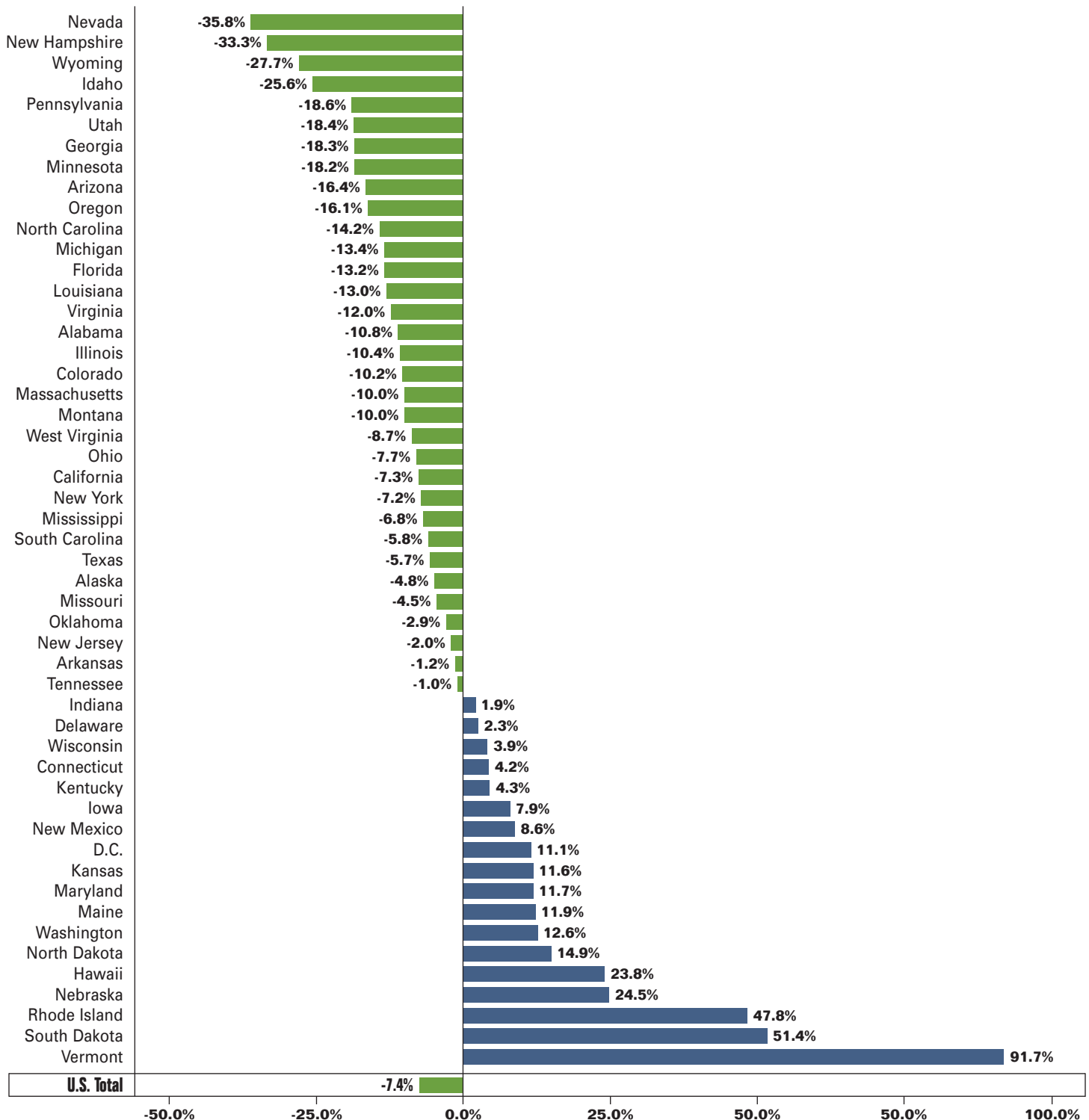
2009 Under 21 Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities

U.S. TOTAL: 1,398



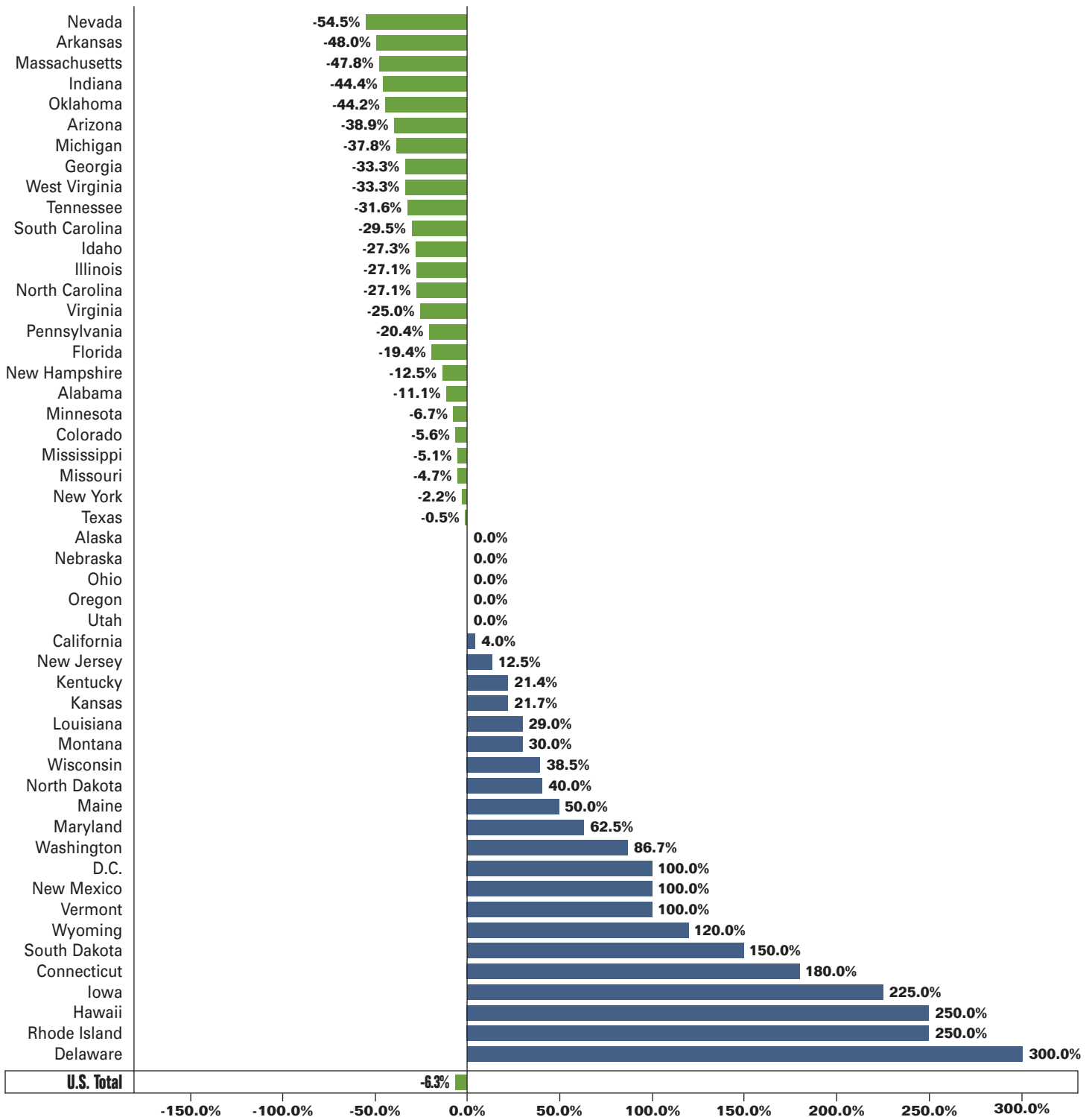
From 2008 to 2009, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities declined nationally and in 33 states.

PERCENT CHANGE IN ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES FROM 2008 TO 2009 BY STATE RANK



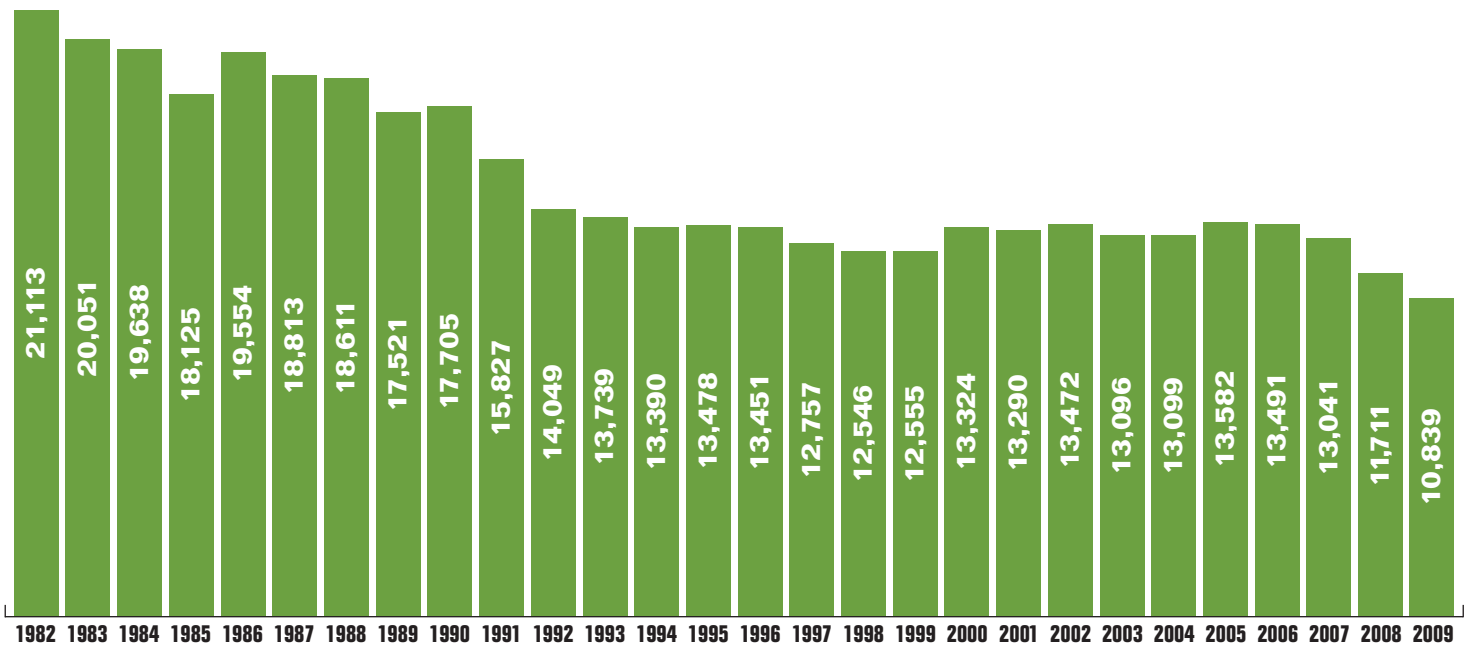
Between 2008 and 2009, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities among those under 21 decreased nationally and in 25 states.

PERCENT CHANGE IN UNDER 21 ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES FROM 2008 TO 2009 BY STATE RANK



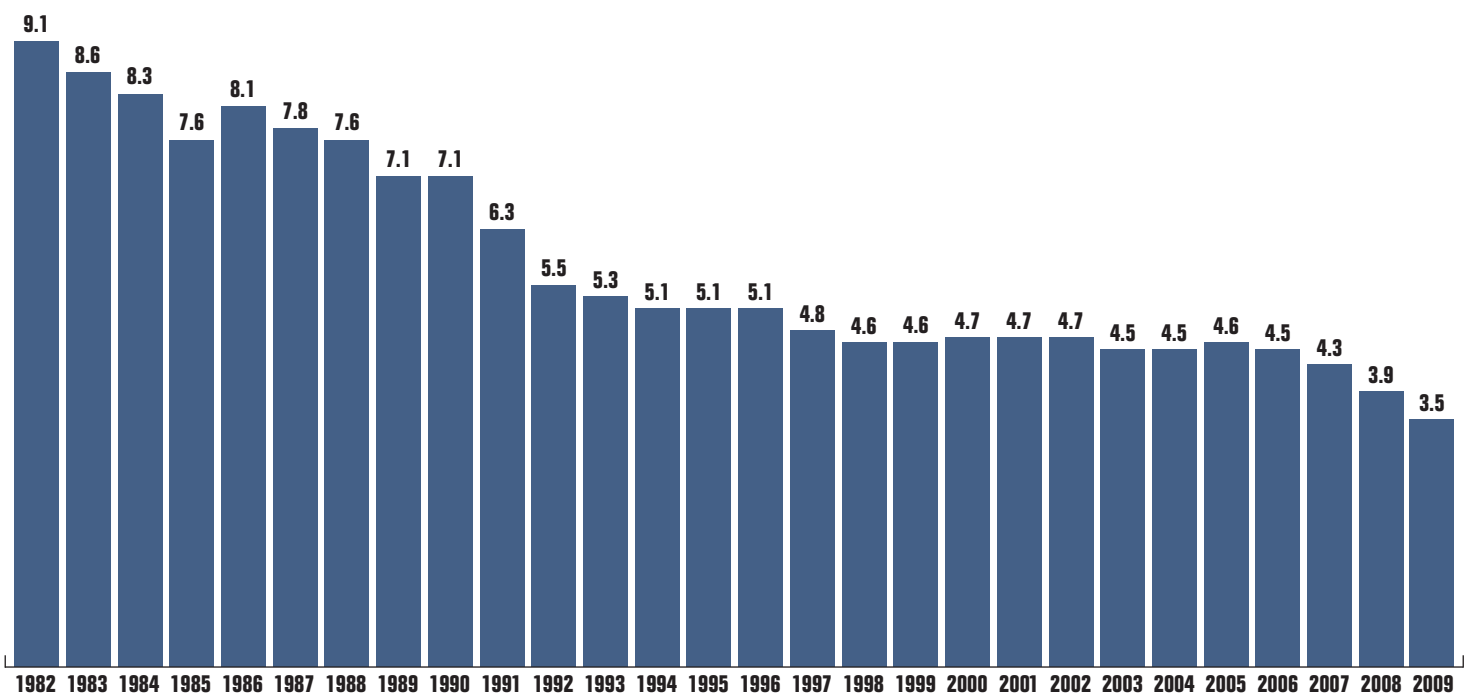
Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities from 1982-2009

ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES
HAVE DECLINED 49% FROM 1982 TO 2009.



Data Source: NHTSA/FARS, 10/10

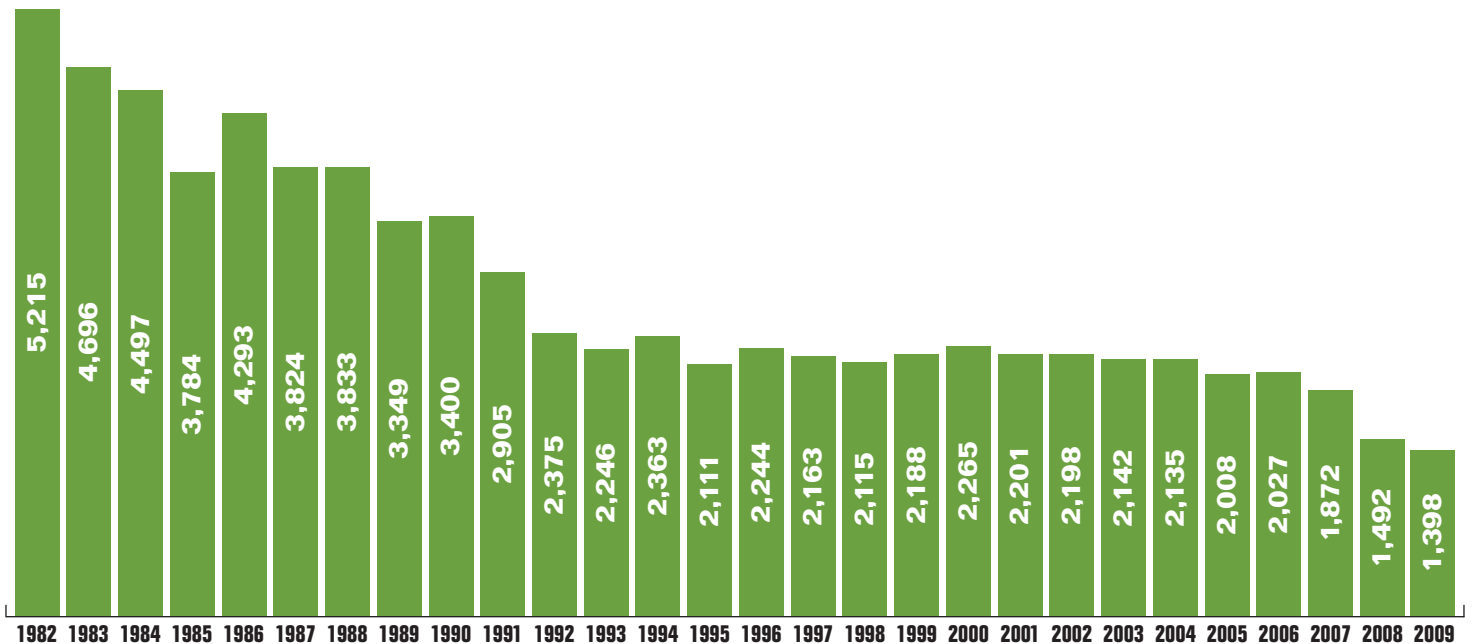
ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES PER 100,000
POPULATION HAVE DECLINED 62% SINCE 1982.



Data Source: NHTSA/FARS and U.S. Census Bureau, 10/10

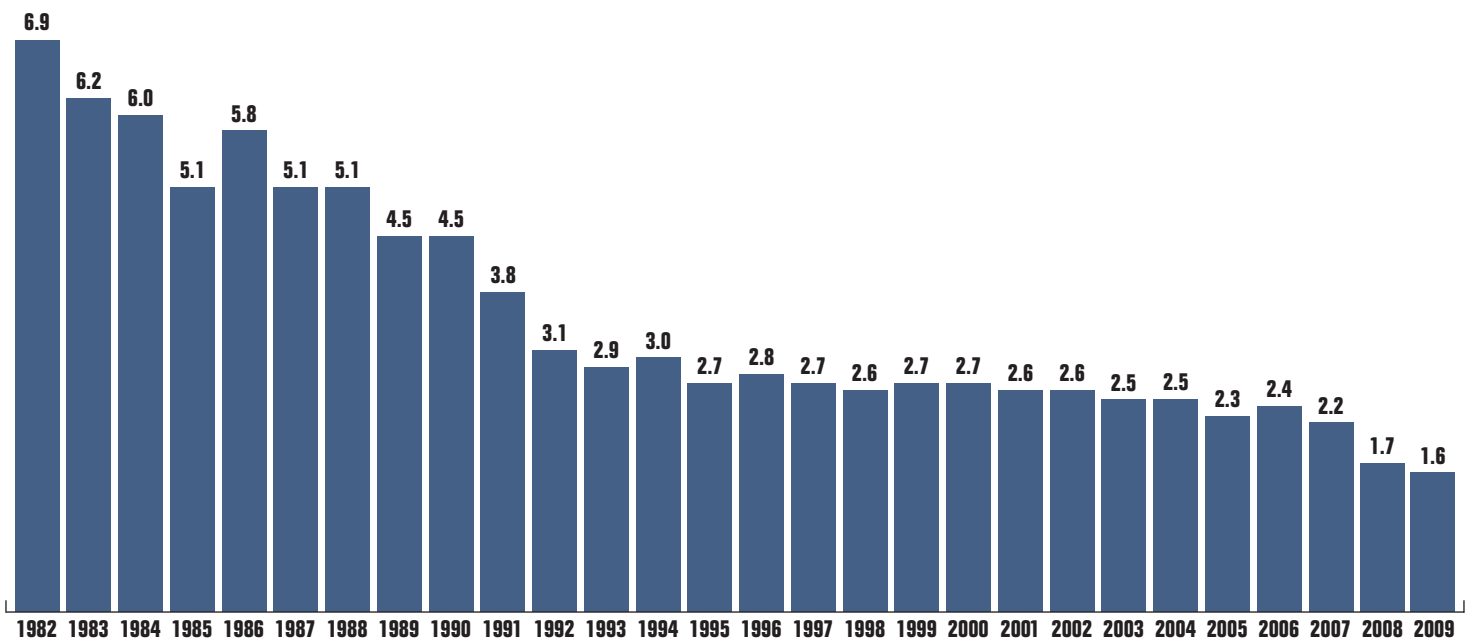
Under 21 Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities from 1982-2009

UNDER 21 ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES HAVE DECLINED 73% FROM 1982 TO 2009.



Data Source: NHTSA/FARS, 10/10

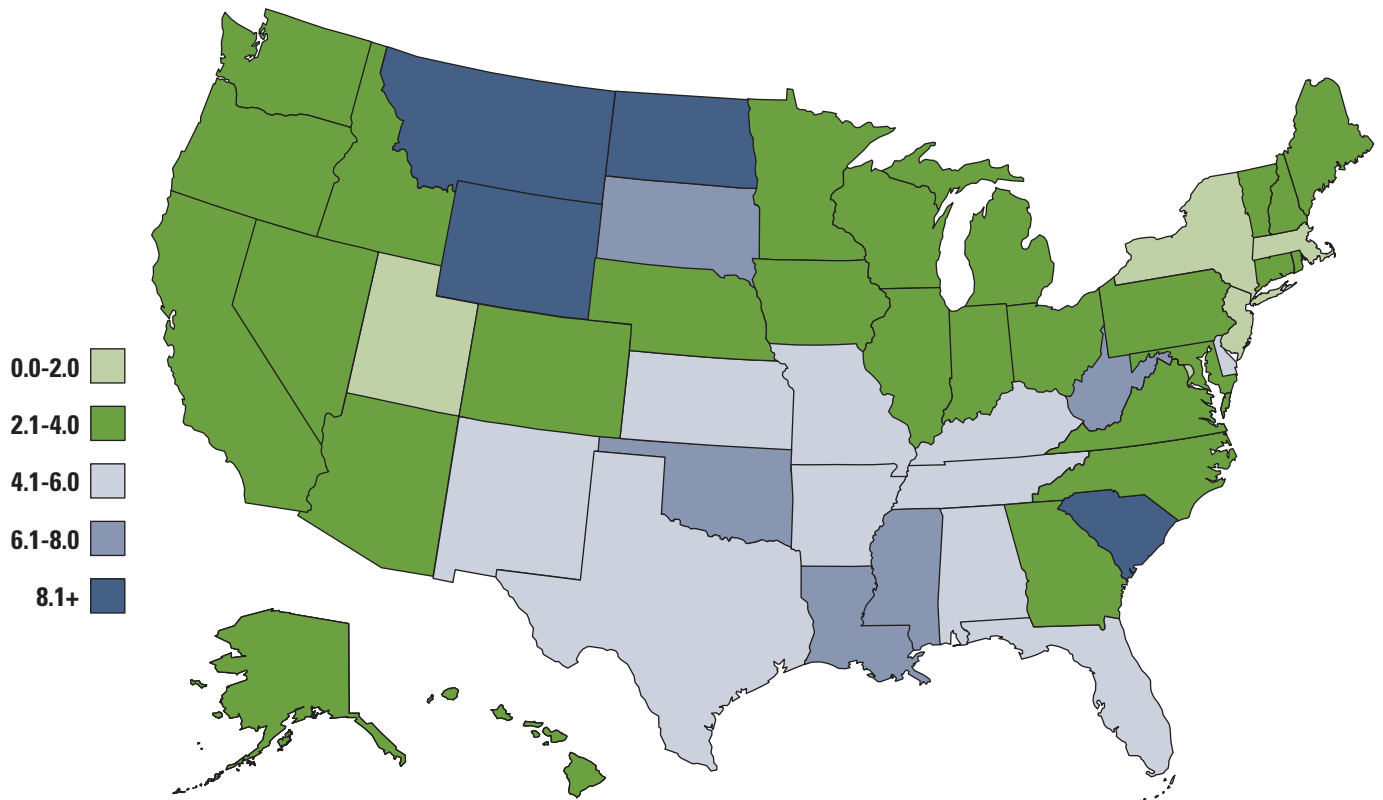
AMONG THOSE UNDER 21, ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES PER 100,000 POPULATION DECREASED 77% SINCE 1982.



Data Source: NHTSA/FARS and U.S. Census Bureau, 10/10

In 24 states and D.C., alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 population were at or below the national average of 3.5 deaths per 100,000 population.

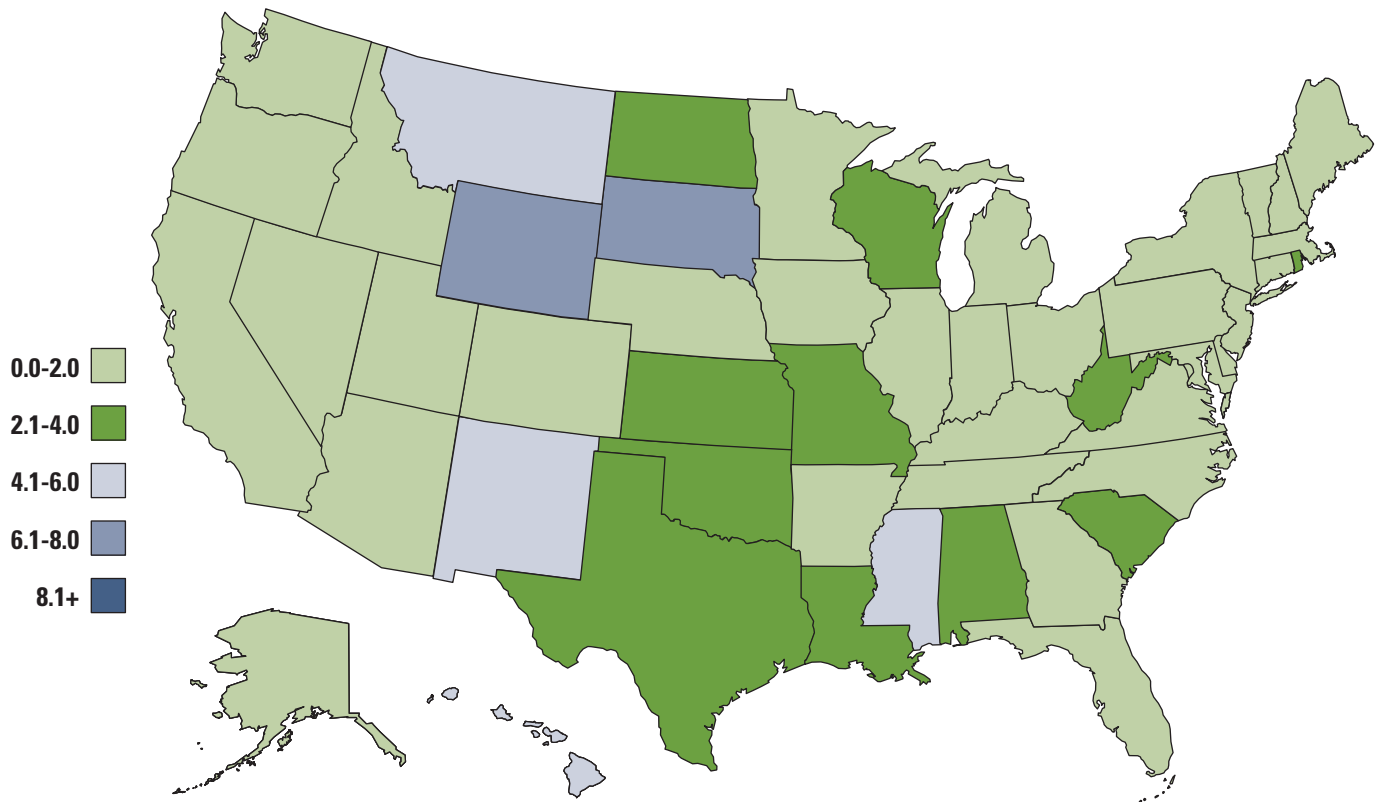
2009 ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITY RATES BY STATE



Alabama	5.9	Illinois	2.5	Montana	8.3	Rhode Island	3.2
Alaska	2.9	Indiana	3.3	Nebraska	3.7	South Carolina	8.3
Arizona	3.3	Iowa	3.2	Nevada	2.6	South Dakota	6.5
Arkansas	5.8	Kansas	5.5	New Hampshire	2.3	Tennessee	4.8
California	2.6	Kentucky	4.5	New Jersey	1.7	Texas	5.0
Colorado	3.1	Louisiana	6.6	New Mexico	5.7	Utah	1.4
Connecticut	2.8	Maine	3.6	New York	1.6	Vermont	3.7
Delaware	5.1	Maryland	2.8	North Carolina	3.9	Virginia	3.1
D.C.	1.7	Massachusetts	1.6	North Dakota	8.3	Washington	3.1
Florida	4.2	Michigan	2.5	Ohio	2.8	West Virginia	6.3
Georgia	3.4	Minnesota	2.1	Oklahoma	6.4	Wisconsin	3.8
Hawaii	4.0	Mississippi	7.9	Oregon	3.0	Wyoming	8.6
Idaho	3.8	Missouri	5.0	Pennsylvania	3.2	U.S. Total	3.5

In 30 states and D.C., under 21 alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 population were at or below the national average of 1.6 deaths per 100,000 population.

2009 UNDER 21 ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITY RATES BY STATE

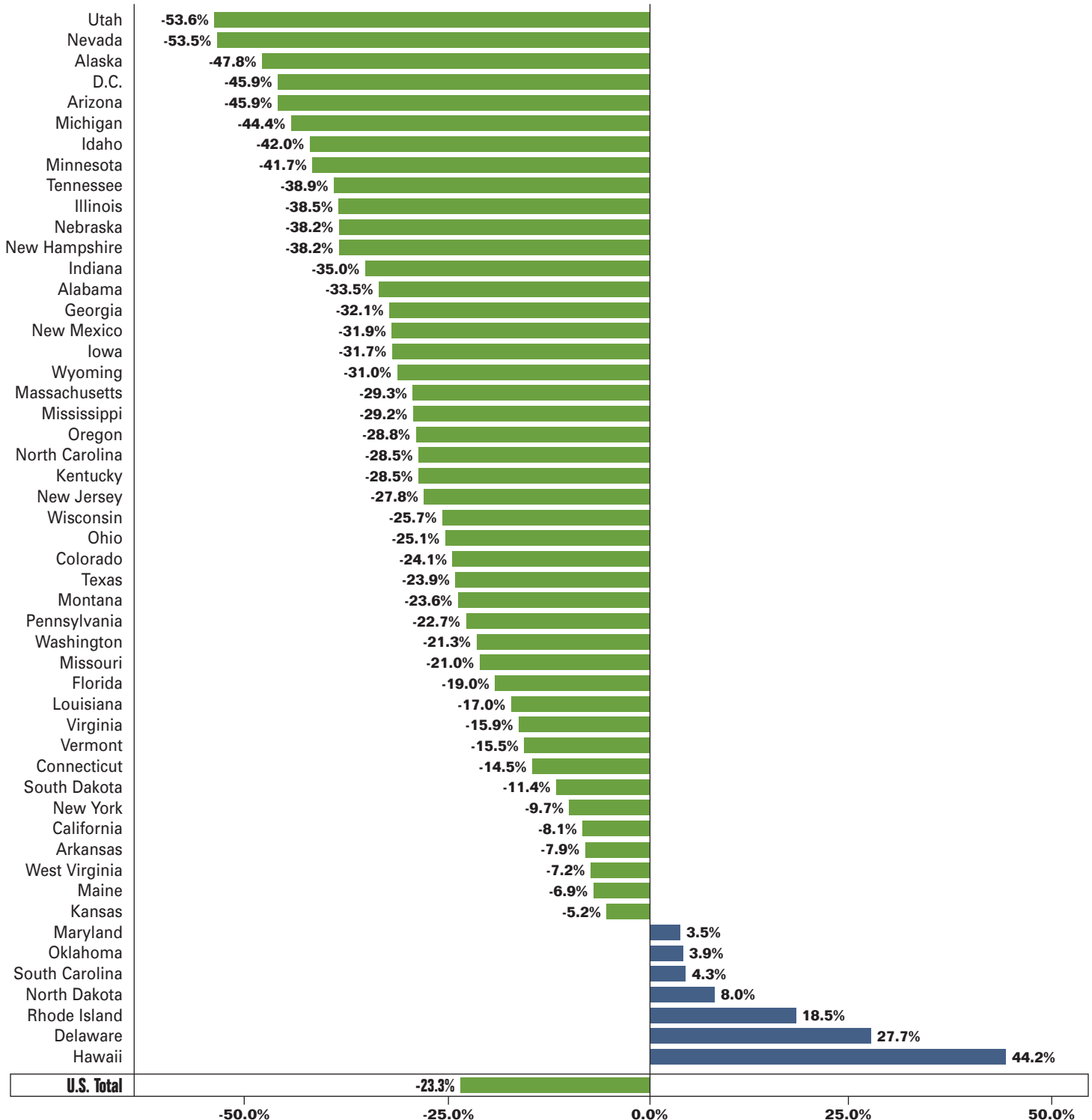


Alabama	2.4	Illinois	0.9	Montana	4.9	Rhode Island	2.5
Alaska	1.4	Indiana	1.1	Nebraska	1.5	South Carolina	3.4
Arizona	1.1	Iowa	1.5	Nevada	0.6	South Dakota	6.3
Arkansas	1.6	Kansas	3.4	New Hampshire	2.0	Tennessee	1.5
California	1.4	Kentucky	1.4	New Jersey	0.8	Texas	2.3
Colorado	1.2	Louisiana	3.0	New Mexico	4.7	Utah	0.5
Connecticut	1.4	Maine	1.8	New York	0.9	Vermont	1.3
Delaware	1.6	Maryland	1.6	North Carolina	1.3	Virginia	1.5
D.C.	0.7	Massachusetts	0.7	North Dakota	3.9	Washington	1.5
Florida	1.7	Michigan	1.0	Ohio	1.2	West Virginia	2.6
Georgia	1.1	Minnesota	0.9	Oklahoma	2.2	Wisconsin	2.3
Hawaii	4.1	Mississippi	4.1	Oregon	1.3	Wyoming	7.0
Idaho	1.6	Missouri	2.4	Pennsylvania	1.2	U.S. Total	1.6

Data Source: NHTSA/FARS and U.S. Census Bureau, 10/10

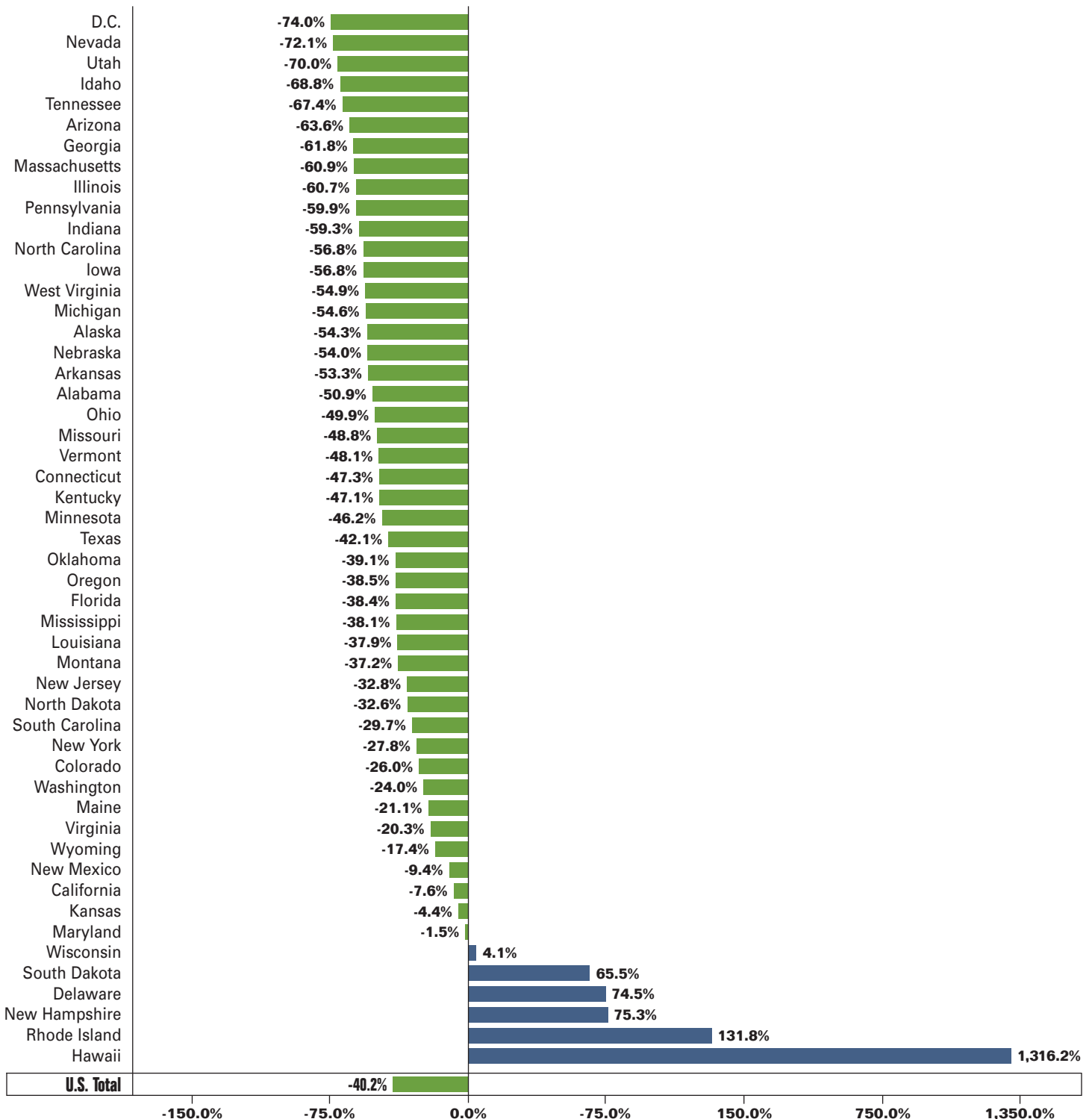
Between 1999 and 2009 alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 population decreased in all but seven states.

PERCENT CHANGE IN ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITY RATES FROM 1998 TO 2009 BY STATE RANK



With the exception of six states, under 21 alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 population declined between 1999 and 2009.

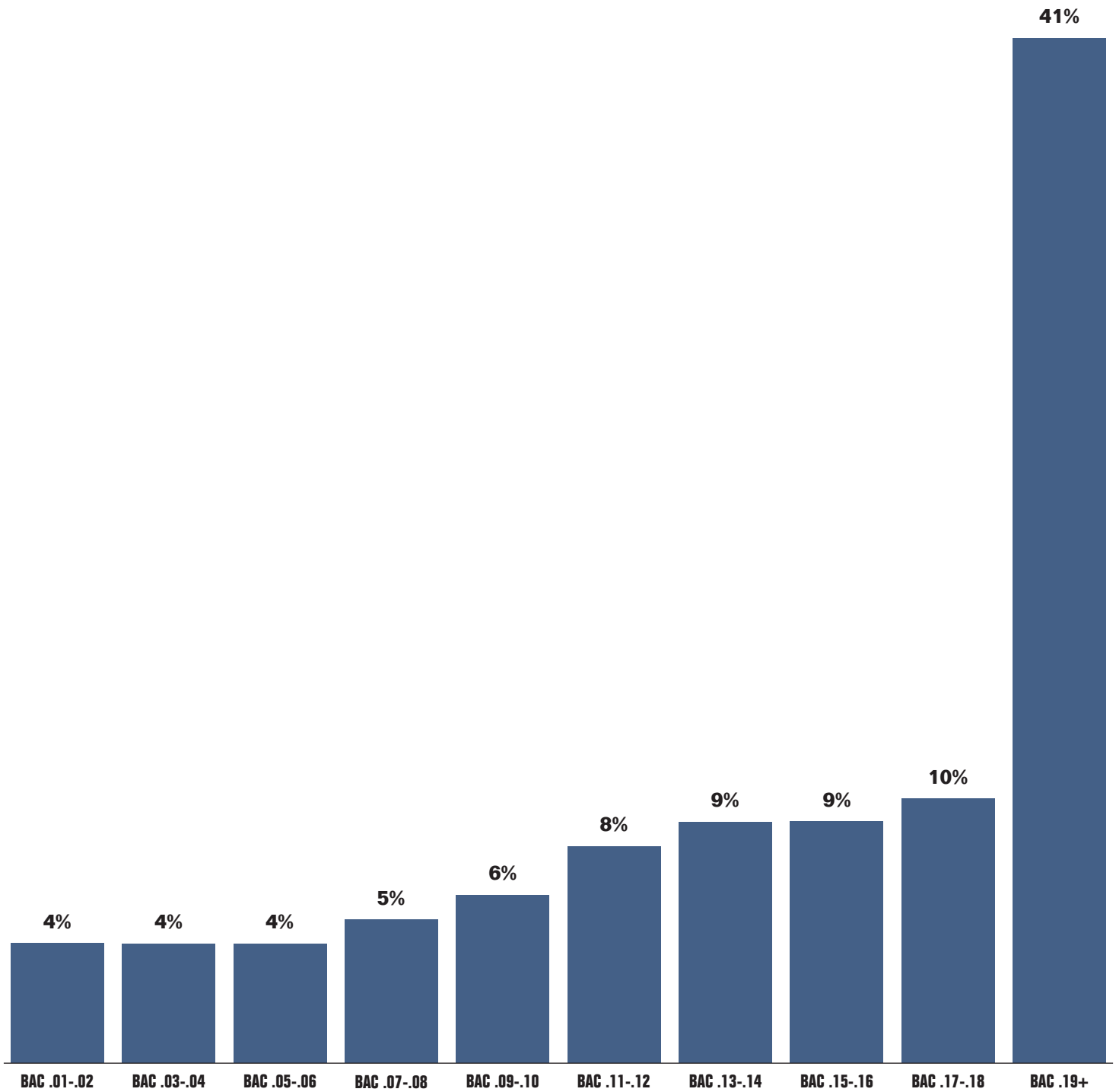
PERCENT CHANGE IN UNDER 21 ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITY RATES FROM 1999 TO 2009 BY STATE RANK



Data Source: NHTSA/FARS and U.S. Census Bureau, 10/10

In 2009, 60% of the alcohol-involved driving fatalities involved high BAC drivers.

PERCENT OF 2009 DRIVERS IN ALCOHOL-INVOLVED DRIVING FATALITIES BY BAC TEST RESULT

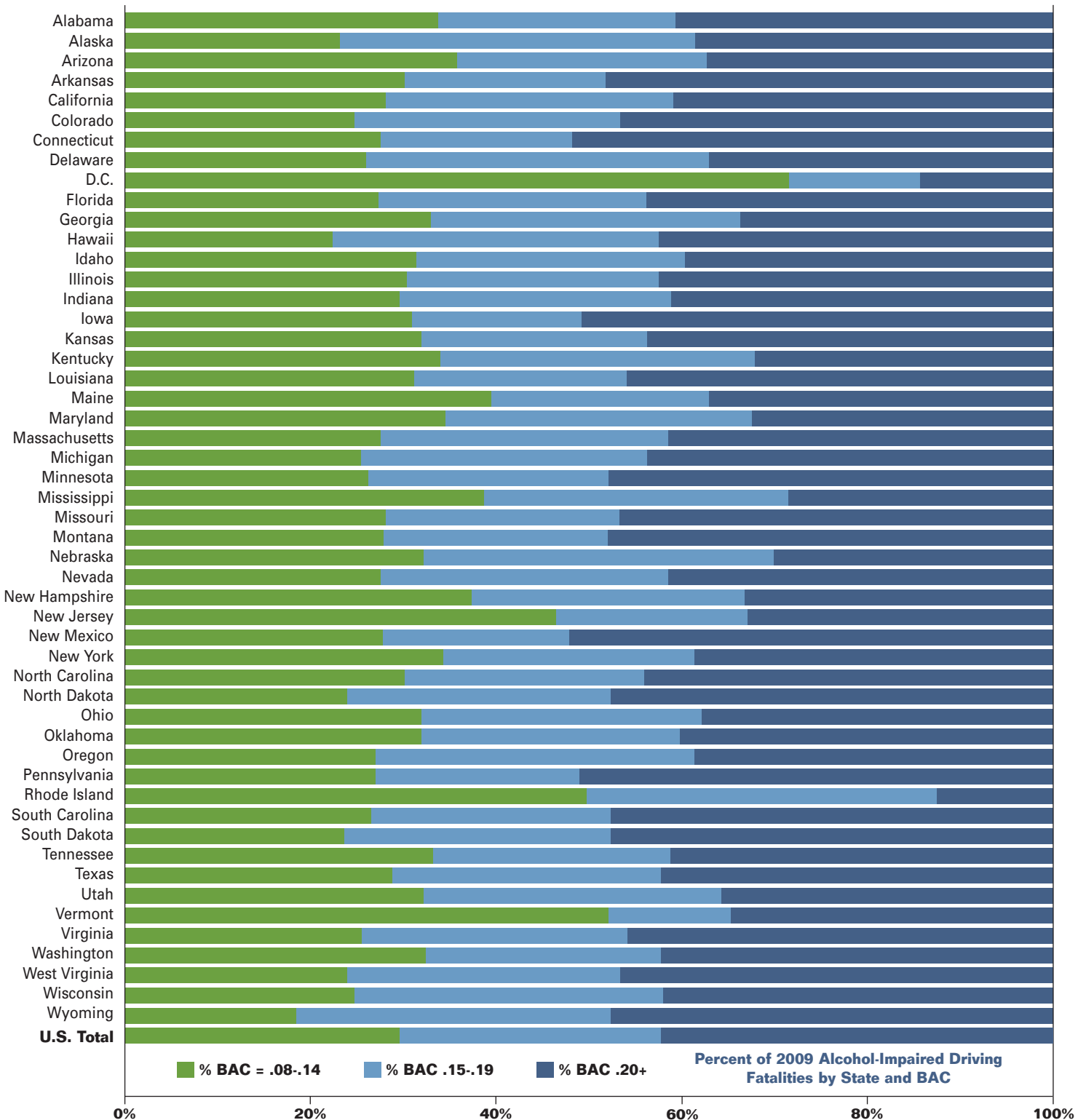


Known Alcohol Test Results of Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes

*Data Source: NHTSA/FARS ARF of Drivers with Known BAC, 10/10
Total may not equal the sum of categories due to rounding.*

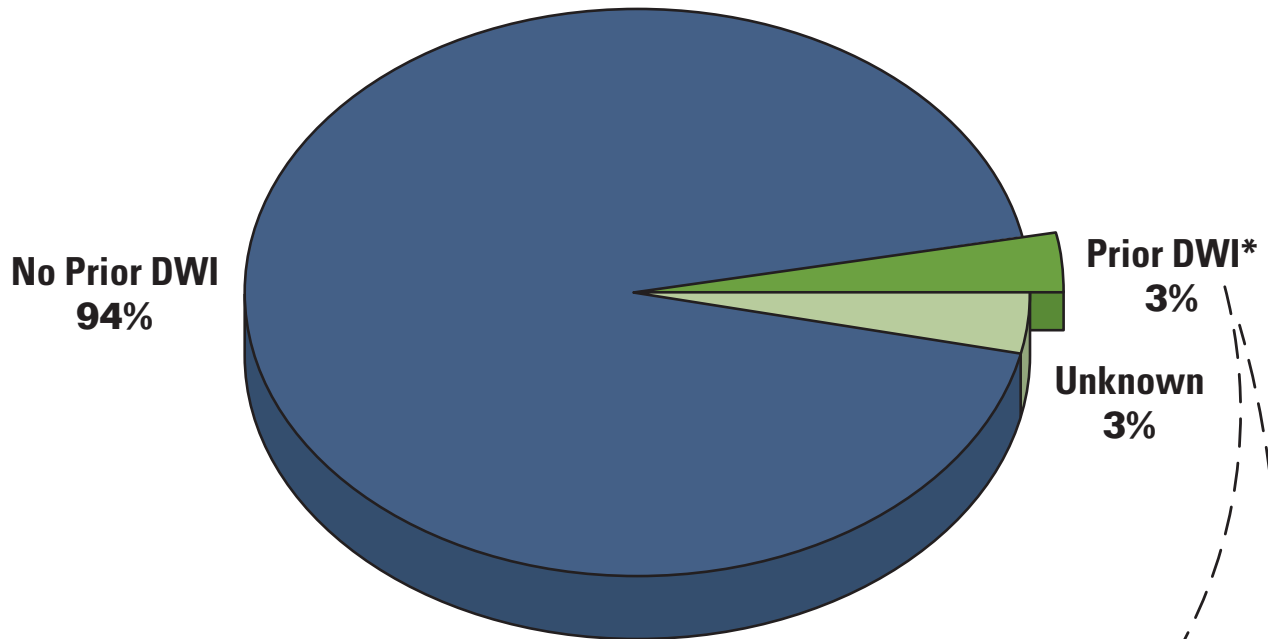
Seven out of ten drivers involved in fatal drunk driving crashes are hardcore drunk drivers in 2009.

HIGH BAC DRIVERS ACCOUNTED FOR 70% OF THE ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED FATAL CRASHES.

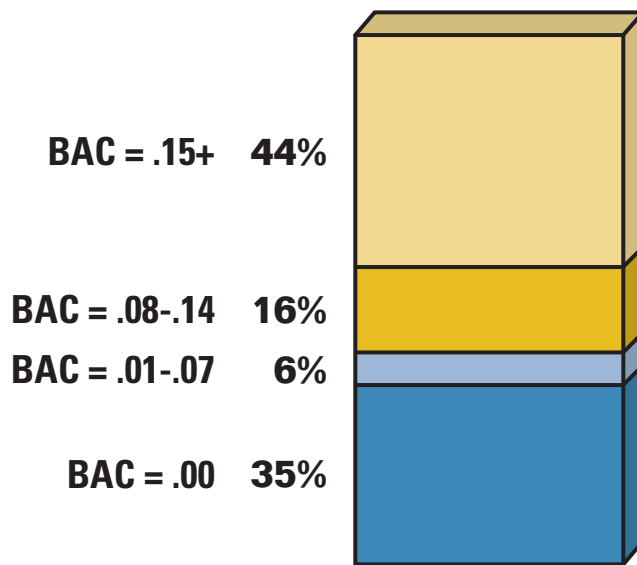


Data Source: NHTSA/FARS - 2009 ARF, 10/10

Four out of ten drivers involved in fatal crashes with a prior DWI* also had a high BAC level at the time of the crash.



Drivers involved in fatal crashes



Repeat offenders by BAC level

Data Source: NHTSA/FARS, 10/10
*Prior convictions only for events occurring within 3 years from date of crash.
Total may not equal the sum of categories due to rounding.

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