



ONE IN FIVE AMERICANS HAS DRIVEN AFTER DRINKING IN PAST YEAR, SAYS NEW FINDLAW SURVEY

Eagan, MN, Dec. 21, 2004 – With the holiday party season in full swing and New Year’s Eve approaching, a new poll by the legal Web site FindLaw.com finds that 20 percent of Americans say they have driven after drinking within the past year.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that 410 people will die in traffic accidents during the upcoming New Year’s holiday period. In addition, fatal accidents during the New Year’s holiday period are 40 percent more likely than non-holiday days to involve at least one alcohol-impaired driver.

One in five American adults admits to driving after drinking within the past year, according to the FindLaw.com survey. Most of those who said they had driven after drinking consumed one or two drinks prior to driving. Only three percent of those surveyed said they had driven within the past year after consuming three or more drinks. The survey interviewed 1,000 adults nationwide, with results accurate to plus or minus three percent.

The FindLaw.com survey found that driving after drinking tends not to be a one-time event. Half of the people who said they had driven after drinking within the past year did so three or more times.

Men were much more likely than women to say they have driven after drinking within the past year. Twenty-six percent of men said they had driven after drinking in the last year, compared with only 16 percent of women.

Two-thirds of those surveyed (67 percent) said they have never driven after drinking. Seventy-one percent of women said they have never driven after drinking, compared with 61 percent of men.

The FindLaw.com survey produced the following results among American adults:

Have driven in the past year after three or more drinks	3%
Have driven in the past year after one or two drinks	17%
Have not driven after drinking in the past year	12%
Have never driven after drinking	67%

While most Americans likely are aware of the personal dangers involved, drinking and driving laws vary widely from state to state, creating confusion about individuals’ legal rights. Most states prohibit a person from driving a motor vehicle if the person has a blood alcohol level above the legal limit, usually either 0.10 or 0.08 percent. In addition, some states have created lesser offenses, such as “driving while impaired,” defined as a blood



alcohol level of 0.07 percent or higher. Other states have enacted enhanced penalties for blood alcohol readings of 0.20 percent or higher.

In addition, “dram shop” and “social host” cases are expanding liability for negligence to taverns, restaurants and individuals who furnish alcohol to intoxicated persons. Detailed information on laws regarding drinking and driving in all 50 states can be found at legal information Web sites, such as FindLaw.com (<http://dui.findlaw.com>). The site also features the largest online lawyer directory, with more than one million attorney listings, searchable by practice area and location. Users can find attorneys in their area experienced with their particular state’s drinking and driving laws.

NOTE TO EDITORS: *The national survey used a representative sample of 1,000 adults nationwide, with a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points, and was conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs.*

COMPLETE TABLE OF RESULTS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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