



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Lara Kohl
lkohl@medstar911.org
(682) 225-7113 (cell)
(817) 632-0507 (office)

Don't Make an Ambulance Your Designated Driver

If you drink this holiday weekend, let someone sober take the wheel

September 4, 2009 (Fort Worth, Texas) Thousands of drivers make the deadly decision to drive drunk. In 2008, 196 people were killed nationally in drunk driving crashes during the Labor Day weekend.

"The days surrounding Labor Day weekend are some of the most dangerous times on the nation's roadways," says Mary Kardell, Executive Director of MADD North Texas. "Stepped-up law enforcement is a critical deterrent for party-goers, and helps stop drunk drivers before they kill or injure others," Kardell adds.

MedStar EMS sees the deadly consequences of drunk driving first hand. That's why we remind people the tragedy from drunk driving can be prevented with a simple choice: If you drink this holiday weekend, choose your ride. Don't make an ambulance your designated driver.

- Designate a driver before you go out.
- Spring for a cab ride. Whatever it costs is way less than the \$17,000 a DWI will cost you.
- Call or text a sober friend to give you a ride.
- Take the bus or other public transportation.
- Sleep it off where you are.

Need a sober ride? Check out these services:

- ridecharge.com - call and pay for a taxi, all on your cell phone
- 1800taxicab.com - taxi directory of local, independently owned and operated cab companies

As a reminder, in Texas, the legal limit for intoxication is .08 BAC. If law enforcement thinks your driving is impaired, you can be stopped and arrested for DWI regardless of your BAC. Penalties get worse with every DWI offense.

Strike One (first conviction)

- \$2,000 fine
- Six months behind bars
- Suspended driver's license for up to a year
- \$1,000 every year for three years to keep your driver's license

Strike Two (second conviction)

- \$4,000 fine
- One year in jail
- Suspended driver's license for up to two years
- \$1,500 every year for three years to keep your driver's license

Get two DWIs within five years and your vehicle will be equipped with an expensive special ignition switch that prevents it from starting if you've been drinking.

Strike Three (third conviction)

- \$10,000 fine
- Two to ten years in prison
- Suspended driver's license for up to two years
- \$2,000 every year for three years to keep your driver's license

Get arrested for drunk driving with a child under 15 in your vehicle, and it's a felony that comes with a \$10,000 fine, two years in a state jail and losing your license for two years.

(DWI penalty information provided by texasdwi.org)

90 Days of Summer Safety

MedStar EMS encourages the community to enjoy their summer activities safely through 90 Days of Summer Safety. Each week from June 15 through September 7 a new summer-themed safety topic will be highlighted with tips and information. Topics include firework safety, drunk driving awareness, and tips for avoiding heat stroke. Check www.medstar911.org each week for the latest Summer Safety topic.

About MedStar

MedStar is the exclusive emergency and non-emergency ambulance service provider to 15 Tarrant County cities including Blue Mound, Burleson, Edgecliff Village, Forest Hill, Fort Worth, Haltom City, Haslet, Lakeside, Lake Worth, River Oaks, Saginaw, Samson Park, Westover Hills, Westworth Village, and White Settlement. Established in 1986, MedStar provides advanced life support ambulance service to 421 square miles and more than 860,000 residents in Tarrant County. MedStar responds to about 100,000 emergency calls a year with a fleet of 47 ambulances.

###