

- In **2002**, alcohol was blamed in the deaths of **614** Texans under the age of **21**, almost five times the number of youth deaths due to all other illicit drugs combined.
- The average age for first use of beer is **12.4** in Texas. Alcohol continues to be the most widely used substance among Texas students in grades **7-12** with **71%** of students reporting they had used alcohol at some point in their lives.
- More than **165,000** Texas teens say they have gone to school drunk, (more than **9%** of all students).
- **25%** of Texas high school seniors say they have driven a car while drunk. That represents **80,000** underage impaired drivers on Texas roads at least once during the past year. (Texas Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse 2003)
- Texas led the nation in alcohol-related deaths in 2002 with **1,745**. That was **47%** of the traffic fatalities in the state. The national average was **41%**. (National Highway Transportation Safety Administration 2003)
- In **2002**, there were **65** alcohol-related traffic fatalities **14** and under in Texas. The number of alcohol-related deaths among those **15-20** was **261**, which was **44%** of all traffic deaths among the age group of 15-20.
- National Highway Transportation Safety Administration 2003
- The latest statistics show a minor drop in total deaths in the percentage of alcohol related deaths among youth age **15-20**. However, Texas still leads the nation in alcohol related deaths among young people.
- In 1999, four states suffered more than 100 alcohol related motor vehicle deaths among those age 15-20. In total and percentage, Texas was number one.

Texas	Total Deaths 574	Alcohol Related 260	45%
California	Total Deaths 497	Alcohol Related 176	36%
Florida	Total Deaths 366	Alcohol Related 114	31%
Pennsylvania	Total Deaths 261	Alcohol Related 101	40%

* *National Highway Transportation Safety Administration 2001*

- Underage drinking costs the state of Texas over **\$5.5 Billion** a year. This number includes, but is not limited to such expenses as uninsured medical costs, property damage, loss of life, fetal alcohol syndrome as well as the cost of treatment for alcohol related medical problems. (Pacific Institute of Research & Evaluation, 2003)
- The Public Services Research Institute estimates that another **10%** decrease in alcohol-related crashes would save the state of Texas **\$220 million** in claims payments and loss adjustment expenses.

The Center for Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation has released updated data on the cost of underage alcohol use in Texas. **Note that underage alcohol consumption costs Texans \$5.5 billion while bringing the alcohol industry \$1.4 billion in sales.**

The Texas Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse conducts a Texas School Survey every two years that examines alcohol and drug use among students. The following are highlights concerning alcohol from the 2003 survey.

- In 2002, 71% of secondary students reported having used alcohol in their lifetime, while 35% say they have had used alcohol within the last month.
- The average age at which all secondary students had first drunk beer was 12.3 years.
- Almost 17% of all secondary students classified themselves as “binge drinkers,” meaning they had five or more drinks at one sitting when they drank (for girls it is four or more drinks at one sitting).
- The easier it is to obtain a substance, the higher the rate of use by students. About 71% of the students believe that alcohol was very or somewhat easy to obtain compared to 66% for tobacco.
- More than 9% of all secondary students said they attended class while drunk at least once during the past school years.
- About 23% of seniors in the 2002 survey admitted they had driven a car after having had “a good bit to drink” at least once in the past year.
- The TCADA survey shows that girls (71%) are now reporting a slightly higher rate of lifetime alcohol use than boys (70%).
- The number of binge drinkers almost doubles between the 7th & the 8th grades. In the 7th grade, 5.1% admit to binge drinking, while the number jumps to 9.3% in the 8th grade, and 16.3% in the 9th grade.

More Texas 7th & 8th graders believe it is more dangerous to smoke than to drink. 64.5% of 7th graders believe it is dangerous to smoke or use smokeless tobacco, while 57.4% believe it is dangerous to drink alcohol. Among 8th graders, 54.5% believe tobacco is dangerous, while 47.6% see the danger in drinking alcohol.