

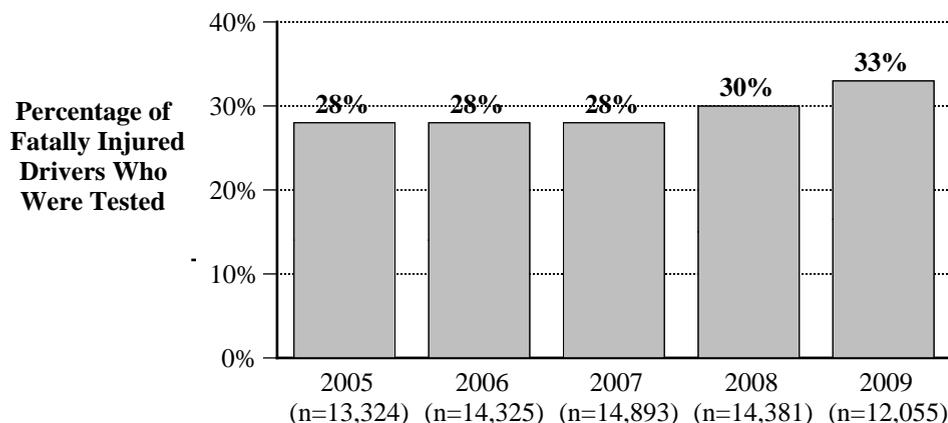
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

One-Third of Fatally Injured Drivers with Known Test Results Tested Positive for at Least One Drug in 2009

The percentage of fatally injured drivers testing positive for drugs increased over the last five years, according to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Each year between 56% and 65% of drivers fatally injured in motor vehicle crashes were tested for the presence of drugs in their systems. In 2009, 33% of the 12,055 of drivers fatally injured in motor vehicle crashes with known test results tested positive* for at least one drug, compared to 28% in 2005 (see figure below). The drugs tested for included both illegal substances as well as over-the counter and prescription medications, (which may or may not have been misused). In 2009, marijuana was the most prevalent drug found in this population—approximately 28% of fatally injured drivers who tested positive were positive for marijuana¹. The authors caution that “drug involvement rates among those with unavailable drug test results may be similar to those for whom results are available, or there may be a systematic bias that could influence the unavailable rates in a positive or negative direction.”

Percentage of Fatally Injured Drivers With Known Test Results Testing Positive for at Least One Drug*, 2005-2009



*Nicotine, aspirin, alcohol, and drugs administered after the crash are excluded. Testing positive for drugs only means that the drugs were found in the driver's system and does not imply impairment or indicate that drug use was the cause of the crash or the fatality.

¹CESAR analysis of 2009 NHTSA FARS data.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), “Drug Involvement of Fatally Injured Drivers,” *Traffic Safety Facts*, November 2010. Available online at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811415.pdf>.

CESAR Wishes You a Very Happy Holiday Season!

This is the final issue of the *CESAR FAX* for 2010. The *CESAR FAX* will resume with Volume 20, Issue 1 on January 10th, 2011. Thank you for your support during the past year!