

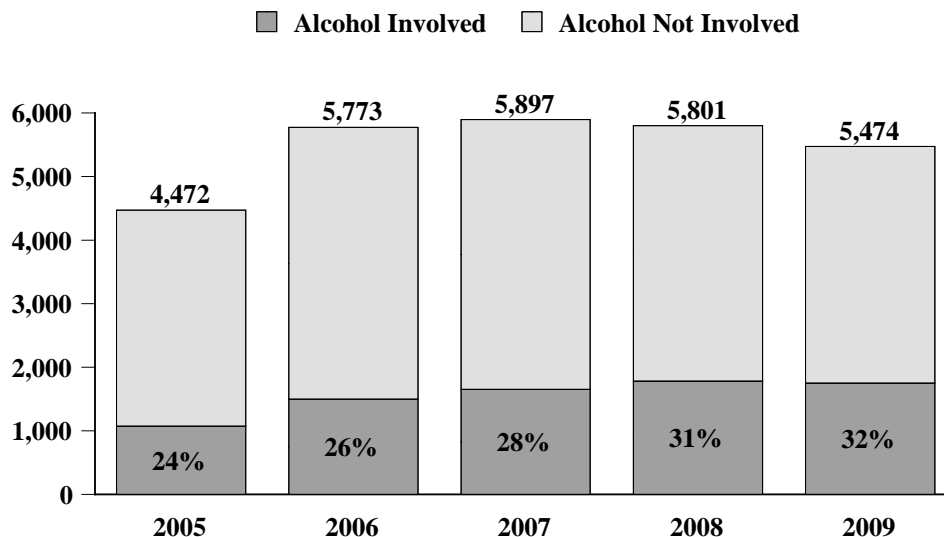
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

***Percentage of Distracted Driving Deaths Involving Alcohol
Increased from 24% in 2005 to 32% in 2009***

An increasing proportion of distracted driving fatalities in the United States involve alcohol, according to data from the national Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). In 2009, there were 5,474 deaths involving drivers who were using a technological device (such as talking or texting on a cell phone) or who were driving in an inattentive or careless manner (such as eating while driving), a slight decrease from 2006-2008, when there were between 5,773 and 5,897 such deaths each year. The percentage of distracted driving deaths involving alcohol, however, has increased over the same time period. Alcohol was involved in 24% of all distracted driving deaths in 2005; by 2009, nearly one-third (32%) of all distracted driving deaths involved alcohol. The authors suggest that since “alcohol-involved drivers may not respond to penalties associated with distracted driving policies” (p. 190), “state policymakers could impose additional penalties in prosecuting alcohol-involved drivers if evidence exists of electronic device use as a contributing factor in a crash” (p. 191).

Number of Distracted Driving Fatalities, by Alcohol Involvement, 2005-2009



NOTES: Data are from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), a census of fatal crashes on U.S. public road. A driver is defined as distracted if investigators determined that the crash resulted from the driver using a technological device (e.g., cell phone, on-board navigation system, computer) or if the driver was operating the vehicle in an inattentive or careless manner (e.g., distraction by children, adjusting the radio, eating). A driver is determined to be alcohol-involved in FARS if the driver had a positive blood alcohol concentration or police-reported intoxication.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from Wilson, F.A., Stimpson, J.P., and Tibbits, M.K., “The Role of Alcohol Use on Recent Trends in Distracted Driving,” *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 60: 189-192, 2013. For more information, contact Fernando Wilson at fernando.wilson@unmc.edu.