



NEWS RELEASE

DUI Incidents Decrease in Greater Washington, COG and WRAP Report

Local drunk driving deaths, however, are on the rise

Washington, D.C. (January 28, 2019) – Alcohol-related crashes, injuries, and drunk driving arrests all decreased in the metropolitan Washington area in 2017, according to the new “*How Safe Are Our Roads?*” Report prepared by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) for the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP). The report was previewed at the COG Police Chiefs Committee meeting last week.

However, alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities increased during this same period. There were 86 alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities recorded in 2017, compared to 59 fatalities in 2016 – a nearly 46 percent increase in such deaths from the previous year.

“The fact that the number of drunk driving deaths increased in Greater Washington in 2017 and that in the same year, the region averaged a DUI arrest every 38 minutes demonstrates that there is still more work to do on the fight against drunk driving,” said WRAP President Kurt Erickson.

“Law enforcement agencies in the region are committed to combatting one of the rare public health issues that is 100 percent preventable – impaired driving,” said COG Police Chiefs Committee Chairman and Arlington County Chief of Police M. Jay Farr. “While there are many proactive education and enforcement initiatives underway in the region, the annual *How Safe are Our Roads Report* allows law enforcement to assess reported incidents and make data-driven decisions on the deployment of police resources with the ultimate goal of making our roadways safer for all travelers.”

Findings from the report include:

Crashes: Area traffic crashes attributed to alcohol and/or drugs decreased by 2.57 percent between 2016 and 2017 (from 4,438 to 4,324 crashes).

Injuries: Regional alcohol and/or drug-related traffic injuries also decreased by 7.14 percent between 2016 and 2017 (from 2,074 to 1,926 injuries).

Arrests: Local arrests for either driving under the influence (DUI) or driving while intoxicated (DWI) decreased by 8.08 percent between 2016 and 2017 (from 14,757 to 13,564 arrests).

Of the metropolitan Washington area’s 271 total traffic fatalities in 2017, nearly a third of these roadway deaths were alcohol and/or drug-related. Nationally, 29 percent of total U.S. vehicular fatalities in 2017 were reported as alcohol-impaired, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

MORE: View the “How Safe are our Roads?” Report.

<http://wrap.org/pdfs/2018SafeRoadsDataReport.pdf>

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The Council of Governments is an independent, nonprofit association where area leaders address regional issues affecting the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. Forward

Founded in 1982, the nonprofit [501(c)(3)] Washington Regional Alcohol Program is a coalition of diverse interests using effective education, innovative programs, and targeted advocacy to end alcohol-impaired driving and underage drinking in the Washington, D.C. metro area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area's alcohol-related traffic deaths historically lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization's popular free safe ride service to prevent drunk driving, SoberRide®.