

Southern California Public Radio

Should states follow NTSB advice and lower DUI limit to 0.05?

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Florida Highway Patrol trooper Raymond Addison conducts a field sobriety test at a DUI traffic checkpoint June 4, 2007 in Miami, Florida. How many drinks would put your blood alcohol level at .05?

The National Transportation Safety Board wants to lower the amount of alcohol it takes for a person to be considered a drunk driver. The NTSB voted to recommend that the legal blood alcohol level be reduced to 0.05 from the current level of 0.08. They say that at .05 BAC, some drivers can struggle with depth perception and other visual functions and be fully impaired at .07.

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Although the number of deaths from drunk driving have dropped by half in the past thirty years, the NTSB says that nearly 10,000 people still die annually in alcohol-related traffic accidents. The U.S. is among a handful of countries with a limit as high as 0.08 but restaurant and alcohol industry groups say that lowering the rate will not stop severely impaired drivers from getting behind the wheel.

Should states follow the recommendation and lower the drunk driving limit to 0.05? Would lowering the limit make a difference in how many drinks you will have before driving? Would lowering the limit lead to fewer alcohol-related traffic deaths?

Guests:

Bruce Lee Livingston, executive director and CEO, <u>Alcohol Justice</u>, a national advocacy organization that campaigns against the influence of the alcohol industry

Sarah Longwell, managing director of The American Beverage Institute

Reaching Zero: Actions to Eliminate Alcohol-Impaired Driving