



**Washington State Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2019: Impairment**  
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**Challenge: Despite improvements, impairment continues to be the main factor in 58 percent of fatal crashes in Washington. Over the last five years, polydrug impaired drivers involved in fatal crashes have increased 15 percent per year.**

The impacts of two Washington state initiatives continue to present new challenges regarding impairment:

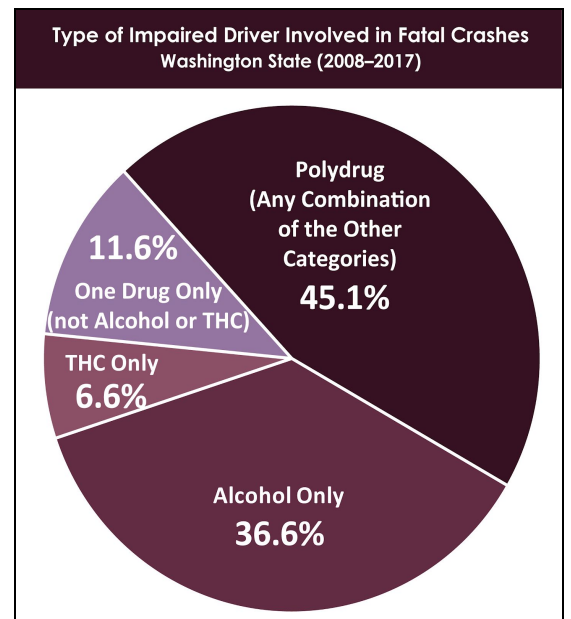
- Initiative 1183 privatized liquor sales and distribution
- Initiative 502 legalized the production, possession, delivery, and distribution of cannabis

**Polydrug use** – combining two or more drugs, or one or more drugs mixed with alcohol – is becoming more prevalent in fatal crashes.

In Washington, the most common polydrug in fatal crashes is alcohol combined with cannabis.

**Strategies and Objectives for Positive Change:**

Reducing the rates at which people are killed or seriously injured in impaired-driving car crashes requires a prioritized, constant, and comprehensive approach. Washington’s efforts are complex, but essentially two-fold.



Public and private sector partnerships need to retool current approaches in order to unravel the challenge of impaired driving.

While maintaining focus on current successful strategies, the Washington Traffic Safety Commission supports new approaches such as:

- Implementing proactive traffic safety such as bystander intervention and promoting positive community norms messages around sober driving
- Rural-directed strategies
- Substantive policy changes that have the potential to create more meaningful change, such as sobriety checkpoints

**What You Can Do:**

- Support strategies for reducing fatalities and serious injuries from impairment – see page 56



- Encourage parents to talk with their children about the risks of alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs
- Support transportation services such as transit (especially at night), designated driver programs, and other ride programs to help eliminate need for impaired individuals to drive
- Support mandatory cannabis salesperson (budtender) training
- Support law enforcement DUI training