



DRUGGED DRIVING A 'PHANTOM MENACE' FOR TODAY'S TEENS
--SADD/Liberty Mutual Survey Reveals Prevalence of This Dangerous Behavior--

BOSTON (September 4, 2002) – For decades, American society has battled the issue of drinking and driving, particularly among teenagers. But new results from the annual survey on teen driving by SADD, Inc. (Students Against Destructive Decisions/Students Against Driving Drunk) and Liberty Mutual Group reveal a more common threat to adolescent safety: drugging and driving.

According to the 2002 SADD/Liberty Mutual survey reporting results of more than 1,600 middle and high school students countrywide, driving after using marijuana is more prevalent (68 percent) than driving after drinking alcohol (48 percent of those who drink 'regularly').

“As if rampant pot smoking by teens weren't problem enough, many of them believe that driving under the influence of marijuana poses little risk of impaired operation,” said Stephen Wallace, a psychologist and SADD's national chairman and chief executive officer. “Marijuana use, even a little, negatively affects driving performance and is linked to tens of thousands of serious automobile crashes, injuries and deaths each year.”

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Other findings from the 2002 SADD/Liberty Mutual teen driving survey include:

- Nearly half (43 percent) of 6th-12th graders have used or are using drugs;
- The majority of licensed teen drivers who use drugs ‘regularly’ report they “drug and drive” (68 percent); and,
- More than half the teens who are using drugs are not concerned about riding in a car with a driver who is using drugs (57 percent).

John B. Conners, Liberty Mutual executive vice president and manager, Personal Insurance, added, “Motor vehicle accidents remain the number-one killer of young people in America, and it is alarming to continually see teens tempting fate by impairing their driving abilities.”

Parents Can Be the Solution

For the third consecutive year, the SADD/Liberty Mutual research has uncovered trends among teen drivers, identifying both areas of concern and opportunity for behavioral and attitudinal change. Prior years’ studies reveal that parents can be very influential in their teens’ driving behaviors, including drug and alcohol use. Data reveals that teens whose parents talk to them about driving behaviors and expectations are less likely to drink, drink and drive, speed, and are more likely to wear their seat belts.

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SADD and Liberty Mutual have created a library of solutions for parents and teens to improve family communication about driving behaviors and other life-and-death issues:

- SADD’s *“Opening Life-Saving Lines”* brochure. This free guide helps parents and teens negotiate the SADD “Contract for Life,” a reciprocal covenant in which teens commit to always wear their seat belt and to never ride with an impaired driver, and parents agree to provide safe transportation home if their teen is ever in an unsafe situation. The brochure is available by calling 1-877-SADDINC.
- Liberty Mutual’s *“Avoiding Collisions – How to Survive the Teenage Driving Years”* video, a 15-minute family program that covers four dangerous teen driving issues -- seat belts, speeding, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and driving at night. The free video is available from a local Liberty Mutual sales office, or by calling 1-800-4-LIBERTY.
- *SADD/Liberty Mutual Family Communication Tips*, suggestions for families to openly and honestly discuss the issues that teens face every day. These tips are available online at www.sadd.org and www.libertymutualinsurance.com.

More information about the SADD/Liberty Mutual survey results is available online at www.libertymutualinsurance.com or www.sadd.org

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SADD, Inc. sponsors peer-to-peer education and prevention programs in middle schools and high schools nationwide.

Celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2002, Boston-based Liberty Mutual Group is one of the largest multi-line insurers in the North American property and casualty industry. Offering a wide range of products and services, including private passenger auto and homeowners insurance, Liberty Mutual Group employs 35,000 people in more than 800 offices throughout the world.

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