

Executive Summary

2020

ALCOHOL and CRIME in WYOMING



**Wyoming Association of Sheriffs
and Chiefs of Police**

Alcohol and Crime in Wyoming - 2020

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 Pandemic that struck the world early in the year 2020 impacted lives in ways unseen in recent history. Sporting events and large gatherings were cancelled, schools were closed or went virtual, businesses closed or began operating under strict restrictions with limited indoor occupancies – and countless number of people were hospitalized or died after contracting the virus. People essentially “shuttered-in” for a period and life’s everyday activities were either reduced or altered significantly. Law enforcement agencies also altered their normal operating procedures and instituted additional safeguards to reduce officer exposure to the virus.

The Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police has been collecting substance-involved arrest data in Wyoming and publishing the results each year since 2005. This collected crime data has been useful for identifying trends for substance abuse in Wyoming communities. However, the year 2020 was unlike any other in the previous sixteen years. It was a “trend buster” in many respects. Whether it was a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or just a continuation of the increase that was experienced in 2019 - the percentage of alcohol-involved arrests in Wyoming increased again in 2020.



Information was collected from a total of 7,995 persons who were arrested and subsequently detained in a county detention facility resulting from a field encounter with law enforcement in 2020. Information has now been collected from a total of 233,787 persons who were arrested in the field and subsequently detained in a detention facility in Wyoming during the last sixteen years.

The Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police publish the results and analysis of the data-collection efforts each year in three separate reports. The main report provides statewide statistics and averages, along with comparisons of county statistics in specific categories. An accompanying supplemental report provides county, community, and local law enforcement agency specific statistics. This Executive Summary provides selected statistics and highlights from the main report. These reports can be accessed online on the following websites: <http://wascop.com> and <http://jandaconsulting.com>

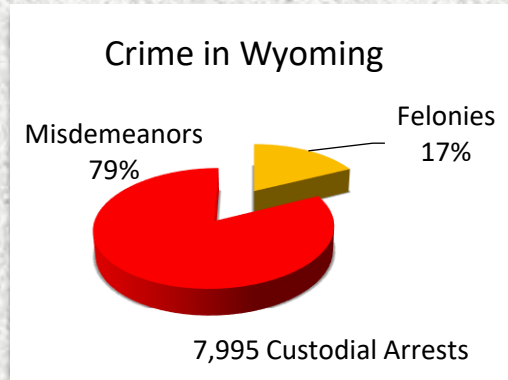
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The profile of the average person taken to jail in Wyoming continues to be relatively consistent with previous years. Three out of four times it was a male (females have increased incrementally in recent years), average age 36. 18% of the time it was an out-of-state visitor and 8% of the time it was an in-state visitor.

Juvenile arrests resulting in detention in a detention facility accounted for less than 1% of the total custodial arrests (48 out of 7,995).

A review of the data collected from the persons arrested and subsequently taken to jail in 2020 indicates that Wyoming continues to be relatively safe from what is generally considered to be “serious” crime. The number of persons who are arrested for felonies are relatively low when compared to the number of persons arrested for minor crimes (misdemeanors). ***However, felony arrests have increased incrementally in recent years and now account for 17% of the total arrests statewide.***



Although the number of alcohol-involved arrests has decreased significantly in recent years, alcohol is still the drug with the greatest impact on crime in Wyoming. Incidents of assaults, disturbances, child abuse and domestic violence all are heavily influenced by alcohol.

The statistics in Wyoming collected during the last ten years clearly indicate that the two crimes that account for the greatest number of custodial arrests are Driving Under the Influence (DUI) and Public Intoxication. Together these two crimes alone have accounted for an average of 45% of all custodial arrests for the last ten years.

Driving Under the Influence is, unquestionably, the crime that has the greatest impact and consequence in Wyoming. It accounts for the greatest number of custodial arrests and is the cause of more deaths and serious injuries than any other crime.

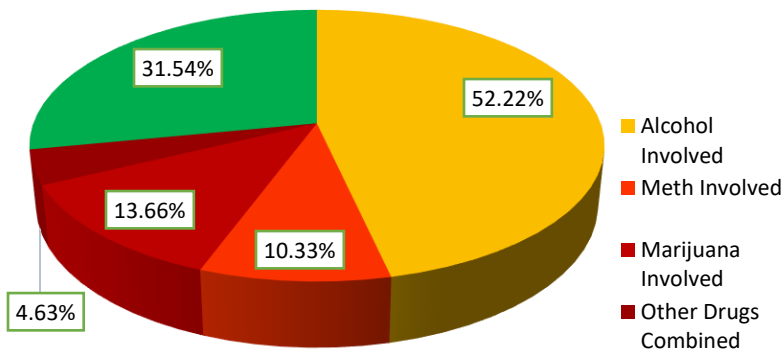
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Public Intoxication is viewed by some as just a public nuisance crime; however, incidents of public intoxication present real and significant threats to public safety. The average BAC for public intoxication arrests in Wyoming in 2020 was almost three times the presumptive level for impairment. Alcohol intoxication at this level often “fuels” behavior that results in more serious crimes than just disturbances and nuisances.

EMERGING TRENDS IN THE TYPE OF SUBSTANCE INVOLVED IN CRIME: Although alcohol-involved arrests continue to be the drug most often present in situations that result in someone going to jail, changing trends in the types of substance involvement in crime in Wyoming have recently emerged. The number of alcohol-involved arrests have continued to decrease - while the number and percentage of other drug-involved arrests have increased.

- ✦ The number of meth-involved arrests has increased each year since 2011 and has more than doubled since then. There were 826 meth-involved arrests in 2020 (there were 420 in 2011).
- ✦ The three counties with the highest number of arrests involving meth in 2020 were: 1) Campbell – 167; 2) Laramie – 145; and 3) Sweetwater – 98.
- ✦ No clear trend for marijuana-involved arrests has been established since the Association began collecting this data in March of 2014. Marijuana involvement increased the first three years, slight decrease for the previous two years and has increased again in 2020.
- ✦ The four counties with the highest number of arrests involving marijuana in 2020 were: 1) Campbell – 232; 2) Laramie – 155; 3) Sweetwater – 141; and 4) Albany – 114.

Meth, Alcohol and Other Drugs Involved Arrests



Percentages total more than 100% due to multi-involvement (polyuse) of substances

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SUMMARY OF SUBSTANCE-INVOLVED ARREST STATISTICS FOR 2020:

- Alcohol and/or other drugs were involved in 69% of the 7,995 custodial arrests.
- Alcohol was involved in 52.22% of all custodial arrests.
- Methamphetamine was involved in 10.33% of the 7,995 reported arrests.
- Marijuana was involved in 13.66% of all custodial arrests.
- Drugs were involved in 25.44% of the reported arrests.
- Arrests for public intoxication accounted for 10.36% of all arrests.
- The average blood alcohol content for persons arrested for public intoxication was 0.2229.
- Driving under the influence arrests accounted for 33.35% of all arrests.
- The average reported blood alcohol content for DUI arrests statewide was 0.1656¹
- 52% of persons arrested for DUI had a reported BAC level above 0.16 and 13% had a BAC of 0.24 or greater.
- The average reported BAC for 358 persons who were arrested for DUI after being involved in a traffic crash was 0.1788.
- 15.53% of person arrested for DUI involved drugs.
- The age group with the highest percentage of DUI arrests were ages 26-30, followed by ages 21-25 and 31-35.

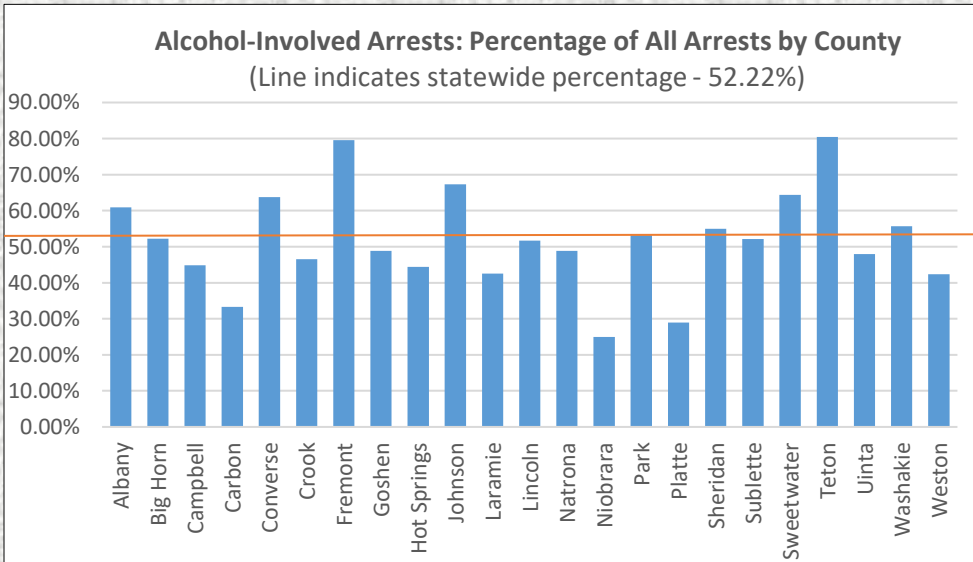


¹ In Wyoming, a person driving with a blood alcohol content of 0.08 is legally presumed to be impaired.

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Substance-Involved Arrests: 2016-2020

Alcohol Involved	Meth Involved	Marijuana Involved	Drug Involved	Public Intoxication
2016 9,054	2016 1,346	2016 1,940	2016 3,229	2016 2,677
2017 6,660	2017 1,351	2017 1,957	2017 3,223	2017 1,858
2018 5,011	2018 1,404	2018 1,542	2018 2,776	2018 1,597
2019 5,707	2019 1,250	2019 1,425	2019 2,475	2019 1,517
2020 4,175	2020 826	2020 1,092	2020 2,034	2020 828

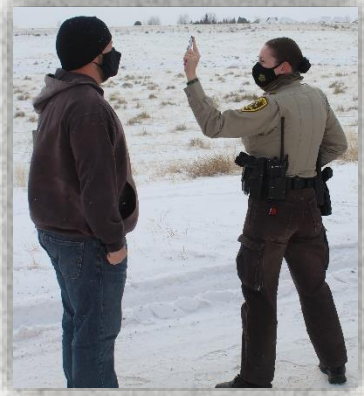


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TRENDS IN ARRESTS FOR IMPAIRED DRIVING:

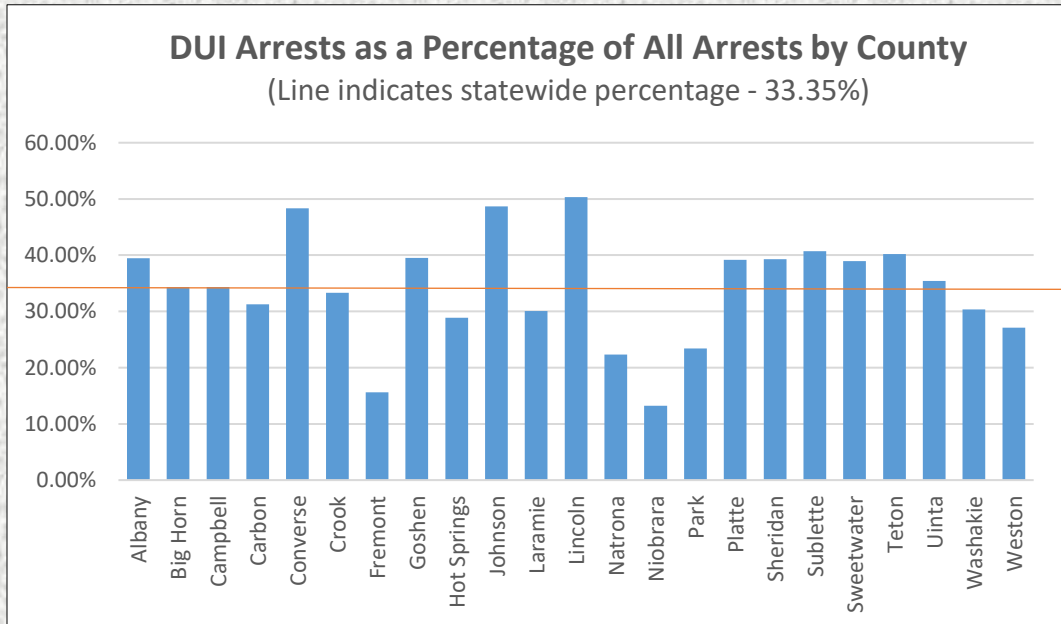
DUI arrests account for an approximate average of 28% of all custodial arrests in Wyoming during the last ten years and a third of all traffic fatalities are the result of impaired driving.

- ✚ The statistics for persons arrested for driving while impaired mirrors the recent trends for all substance-involved arrests.
- ✚ The number of persons arrested for driving impaired has decreased during the last ten years while the percentage for other drug-involvement for impaired driving arrests has increased.
- ✚ The average blood alcohol content for persons arrested for impaired driving during the last ten years remains at double the presumptive level for impairment.

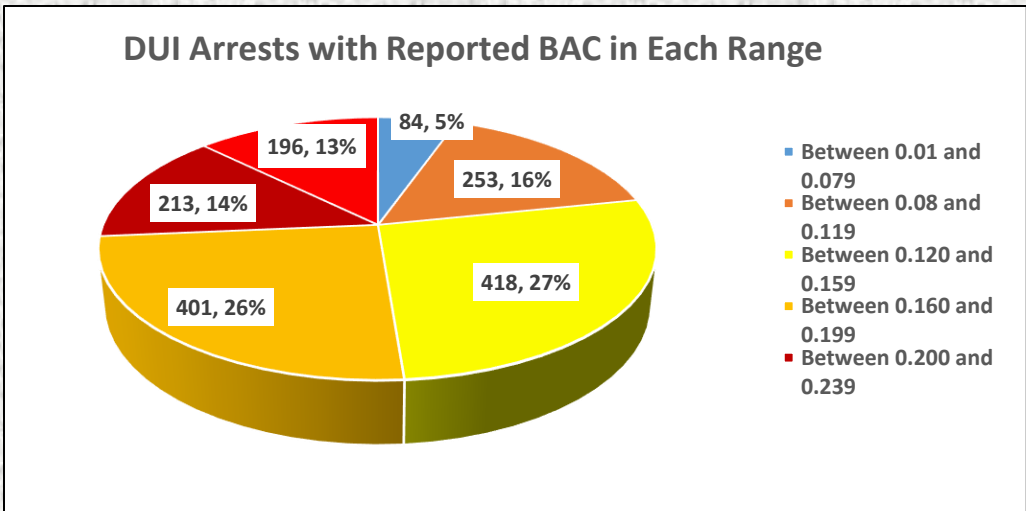


DUI Arrests as a Percentage of All Arrests by County

(Line indicates statewide percentage - 33.35%)



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Driving Under the Influence Arrests: 2014 - 2019

Number of Arrests	% of Total Arrests	Average BAC	Drugs Involved
2016 3,729	2016 26.70%	2016 .1591	2016 16.55%
2017 3,628	2017 26.60%	2017 .1670	2017 14.47%
2018 3,355	2018 27.13%	2018 .1578	2018 14.13%
2019 3,275	2019 27.78%	2019 .1564	2019 12.09%
2020 2,666	2020 33.35%	2020 .1656	2020 15.53%

NOTE: The DUI arrest total for 2020 on this graph does not include an additional 395 unreported DUI arrests.

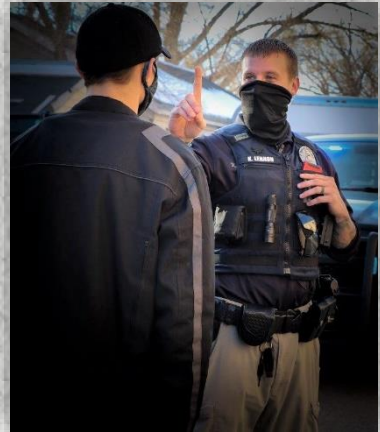
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PUBLIC CONCERNS

The high percentage of alcohol involved arrests, the inordinate number of arrests for public intoxication and DUI and the high levels of BAC recorded for individuals arrested for public intoxication appear to validate the concerns about alcohol abuse expressed by Wyoming residents in the most recent statewide public opinion survey².

Some excerpts from the survey that involved 4,798 Wyoming residents:

- 79.7% view alcohol abuse by Wyoming adults as a serious or somewhat serious problem.
- When Wyoming residents were asked whether they would support a state law that would prohibit selling or serving alcohol to someone who is obviously intoxicated:
 - 64.3% strongly supported such a law.
 - 17.9% somewhat supported such a law.
- 84.5% of Wyoming residents believe that drinking and driving in their community is a serious or somewhat serious problem.



SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS AND FINDINGS

Listed below are a few of the noteworthy statewide averages and county specific alcohol-related statistics and findings from the DATA/STATISTICS section of the main report.

- **Alcohol was a factor in 52% of the custodial arrests in Wyoming.**
 - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
 - Teton – 80.42%
 - Fremont – 79.53%
 - Johnson – 67.33%

² Wyoming Alcohol Use Issues Survey, Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center, November 2012

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- **Methamphetamine was involved in 10.33% of the arrests statewide.**
 - Counties with significantly higher number of arrests:
 - Campbell – 167
 - Laramie – 145
 - Sweetwater – 98
- **Drugs (other than alcohol) were involved in 25.44% of the reported arrests statewide.**
 - Counties with significantly higher number of arrests:
 - Campbell - 361
 - Laramie – 294
 - Sweetwater – 233
- **Marijuana was involved in 13.66% of the arrests statewide.**
 - Counties with significantly higher number of arrests:
 - Campbell – 158
 - Laramie – 155
 - Sweetwater – 141
- **Arrests for Public Intoxication accounted for 10.36% of all arrests statewide.** Counties with significantly higher statistics:
 - Fremont – 142 (23.83%)
 - Campbell – 130 (10.46%)
 - Sweetwater – 121 (19.15%)
- **The average blood alcohol content for all persons arrested for public intoxication was 0.2229.**
 - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
 - Converse – 0.2900
 - Johnson – 0.2727
 - Carbon – .2700



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➤ **Driving under the influence (DUI) arrests accounted for 33.35% of all arrests statewide.**

- Counties with significantly higher statistics:
 - Lincoln – 50.33%
 - Johnson – 48.67%
 - Converse – 48.35%

➤ **15.53% of the arrests for DUI involved drugs.**

- Counties with significantly higher statistics:
 - Hot Springs – 30.77%
 - Carbon – 27.94%
 - Park – 27.27%

➤ **The average blood alcohol content (BAC) reported for persons arrested for DUI was .01656.**

- Counties with significantly higher statistics:
 - Sweetwater - 0.1898
 - Weston – 0.1880
 - Natrona – 0.1968

➤ **The average BAC reported for 279 arrests involving traffic crashes that involved alcohol was 0.1788.**



➤ **52% of persons arrested for DUI had an average blood alcohol content above 0.16.**

➤ **213 persons arrested for DUI had a BAC of 0.20 or higher.**

➤ **199 persons arrested for DUI had a BAC of 0.24 or higher.**

➤ **Juveniles accounted for less than 1% of the arrests statewide (48 total).**

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April 2020

The analysis of the data collected by the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police and the printing of this report was made possible through the assistance of grant funds received from the Wyoming Department of Transportation – Highway Safety Program. The project was managed by Johnson and Associates of Douglas, Wyoming. This report was authored by Ernest L. Johnson, Director of Services.