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Ruining Your Life by Christmas Party, Part II: Your Own Party (Happy Holidays!)

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The holidays are filled with festive family, friend and work celebrations that often involve alcohol. The team at Jonathan Perkins Injury Lawyers wants everyone to enjoy getting together, while making sure everyone gets home safely.

— *This article is from an announcement from Jonathan Perkins Injury Lawyers. [Part I in this series](#) involved the office Christmas party. If you provide your holiday party guests with enough booze that they get into trouble on the way home, you may be facing these attorneys in court. Here's advice in avoiding all that.*

“Holiday parties should be a time to make wonderful memories, not create permanent personal and legal consequences for causing someone else harm,” explained Attorney Jonathan Perkins. “A combination of common sense and an understanding of Connecticut alcohol statutes can prevent tragedy, legal liability and financial loss.”

Driving Under the Influence

Drinking alcohol decreases brain functionality, along with impairment of thinking, reasoning and coordination that can inhibit one's ability to drive properly. Driving under the influence (DUI) includes impairment from alcohol or any other substance such as marijuana or drugs.

“The obvious way to prevent getting charged with DUI or causing a devastating auto accident is to never, ever drink and drive,” explained Attorney Jonathan Perkins. “There is no 'safe' amount to drink then get behind the wheel.”

Designating a sober driver or using one of the many smartphone applications to get a ride may cost a bit in the immediate future but could save a lot, including potentially saving someone's life or even your own.

Legal Limits

The maximum blood-alcohol content (BAC) for Connecticut is .08 percent. For any percentage over this amount a driver is considered 'per se intoxicated,' meaning that alone is sufficient evidence to convict a driver of DUI. Those tested with a BAC at 0.16 percent receive more stringent punishment, which can include suspension of the driver's license for up to one year.

Due to 'zero tolerance laws,' drivers under the age of 21 with a .02 percent blood-alcohol level or above are subject to DUI penalties. That's the equivalent of one beer, one shot of liquor or one small glass of wine.

Stiff Penalties

With the first DUI offense, the Department of Motor Vehicles imposes mandatory license suspension for one year; for the second offense, three years; for the third offense, the driver's license is revoked.

An ignition interlock device can be installed at the driver's expense upon the second DUI conviction. Mandatory alcohol education is a possible punishment. Drivers who have their licenses suspended by the DMV will be required to install an ignition interlock device to get their licenses back.

The device requires an operator to blow a breath sample into a tube. The vehicle won't start if the test comes back with a blood alcohol content of 0.025 or above. It will also require giving random samples while operating a motor vehicle.

DUI is considered a felony after the third conviction.

“When you get a driver's license, you agree to 'implied consent laws,' which include showing a driver's license and proof of insurance upon request and submitting to breath, blood, or urine testing to prove intoxication,” said Attorney Perkins. “Drivers who refuse to cooperate may face suspension of their driver's

license for up to one year.”

Social Host Liability

Perkins notes that legal woes can result not just from consuming alcohol, but serving it as well.

Social host liability laws in Connecticut hold hosts liable for injuries caused by individuals after the host served them alcohol. Liability often extends to not only others who are injured by the individual’s actions, but to the individual as well should he or she be injured.

A negligence charge may supply another route for a personal injury victim to recover if a host negligently served alcohol, especially if the person who caused the accident was a minor.

“Bottom line, if you are hosting a holiday party, make sure all guests have a designated driver,” said Attorney Perkins. “Put alternate transportation plans in place beforehand as a backup in case anyone’s plans fall through.”

Business Owner Liability

The Liquor Control Act in Connecticut prohibits an alcoholic liquor permittee or their employees from providing alcohol to intoxicated persons. Violations are punishable by up to a \$1,000 fine, up to one year imprisonment, or both, for each offense.

A permittee, such as a restaurant or bar, is liable if the permittee or his or her employee sells alcohol to an already-intoxicated person who injures a person or damages property.

The actual amount of liability in a particular case is decided in court. The act limits the damages a permittee must pay to injured people to \$250,000.

“It’s important for bartenders or servers to know that if they provide alcohol to someone who causes an injury or death due to intoxication, they may also be personally liable under certain circumstances,” stated Attorney Perkins.

The Rights of Injury Victims

Financial compensation is often the last thing on someone’s mind after escaping a serious car accident, especially a drunk driving accident. However, people may be entitled to compensation for both injuries and other damages that come from such an event, including emotional distress and for pain and suffering.

Attorney Perkins cautions that damages become much more difficult to recover after time has passed, which makes it important to find the right personal injury lawyer early in the process.

The first part of the process is discerning who is liable for the damages and can be held accountable.

Examples of such persons include:

—The driver of the other vehicle in the crash

—Governing entities if there was a defect in the roadway that led to or worsened the conditions for the accident

—Third parties that intervened in some way, causing a negative effect

—The owner of the other vehicle

—The insurance company of the owner of the vehicle the victim was driving if the at-fault driver was not insured

—The establishment that served the driver in excess prior to a drunk driving accident

—Your own insurance company

—The insurance company of a relative that lives in the same household if you do not have insurance in order to get underinsured motorist benefits

Figuring out the best party to pursue legally can be difficult. Through their years of experience, the Jonathan Perkins Injury Lawyers' team has the knowledge needed to get the most favorable outcome in a drunk driving accident in Connecticut.