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R.I. tops drunk driving list

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A U.S. safety group Tuesday released this year's list of 15 deadliest states in which 41 percent or more of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related.

The list was prepared by the Chicago-based physician-led group End Needless Death on Our Roadways in cooperation with the National Safety Council.

The Fatal Fifteen states in rank order are Rhode Island, Montana, Texas, Louisiana, Hawaii, Wisconsin, Illinois, Maryland, South Carolina, Washington, South Dakota, Connecticut, Oregon, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia also are included on the list.

States making the list for two years straight are Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Montana, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Wisconsin, along with the District of Columbia.

"Motorists are facing an epidemic of death on our roadways, and tragically many of these fatalities and serious injuries could have been prevented," says Dr. Andrea Barthwell, co-chair of the group.

Statistics show that last year, nearly 17,000 motorists were killed nationwide in alcohol-related traffic crashes. Nearly 6,000 of those fatalities occurred in the Fatal Fifteen.

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