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But I only had a Couple

dinner or after work. After a few, you don't necessarily *feel* drunk, but *legally* many of you are impaired enough

Out of curiosity he asked the officer if he could blow in the alcohol tester just to see what his BAT was. The officer was more than happy to accommodate and pulled the meter out of the trunk. After going through the proper instruction my friend blew into the meter and it read out .14—legally drunk!

As a ground safety manager, I've been alarmed at an increase in Air Force Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) incidents. Why are DWIs on the rise in the Air Force? Well as everyone should know, there is no one single answer to this question. However, the information and consequences are no secret to anyone. This issue has been in the front lines for years and laws have been in place and publicized across the board. However, recently, a small piece of the pie that might answer this question has come to my attention. The major incriminating fact that sticks out among most convicted DWI offenders is the Blood Alcohol Test (BAT). And despite what you might think, it does not take much to get a legally intoxicated BAT.

to be convicted for drunk driving. If you've had a few beers and you're thinking "*I can drive home,*" remember it's a drunk person talking.

This false sense of security after drinking "*only a couple*" is ruining careers. Not long ago, a fellow coworker of mine went out for a night on the town. He had lined up a designated driver for the night and things were going good. When it came time to leave, however, the car they were driving had a flat tire in the parking lot. During the process of changing the tire, a local police officer came up to offer assistance. My coworker was, by this time, feeling like he could drive because he had only had "*a couple*" during the evening.

The BAT took him by total surprise. He thought he was fine based on his actions and past habits. You see it only takes "*a couple*" to get you into that little known buffer zone of trouble. A BAT of .08 is not much to work with and it's not worth a career to chance it.

So the next time you have "*a couple*," think about my coworker. Develop a safety plan to get where you are going and stick to it. Your career, family life, and your life, are all riding on your decision. By not drinking and driving — even when you've only had "*a couple*," you will help make the roads safer and cut the DWI rate—and in the end, go home and not to jail. ▶

A BAT level of .08 to .12 is all it takes. It's the number one reason a person gets convicted. What does this mean to the average Air Force member? If you drink between one to four beers, you can blow a BAT that can result in a conviction.

A person who thinks they are O.K. to drive is usually what's called a casual or social drinker. This concept describes many of us. You know the one who has a couple of drinks with

States With High DUI Fatality Rates

The state with the highest alcohol-related fatalities rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel is South Carolina. In 2001, other states with high alcohol related fatalities were: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, District of Columbia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming.

States with the lowest alcohol related fatalities rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel are: California, Indiana, New York, New Jersey, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia.