



DUI TASK FORCE PLAN

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Submitted to:
Montana Highway Traffic Safety Section
Montana Department of Transportation

Our Mission:

To reduce impaired driving including the number of alcohol and drug-related motor vehicle crashes, injuries, and deaths in Sweet Grass County by implementing the methods and strategies outlined below. Efforts chosen by volunteer members may include, but are not limited to: prevention, consequences, healthy choices, compliance, enforcement, evaluation, and cooperative community involvement.

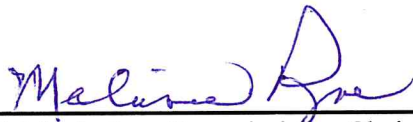
Prepared by:

Sweet Grass County DUI Task Force
PO Box 567
Big Timber, MT 59011
(406)932-5143

Approved by:

Sweet Grass County Commissioners

We, by our signatures, as the Commissioner Board of Sweet Grass County, resolve to approve the existence and Mission of the Sweet Grass County DUI Task Force for the Fiscal Year of July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026



Melanie Roe, Commissioner Chair

5-13-25

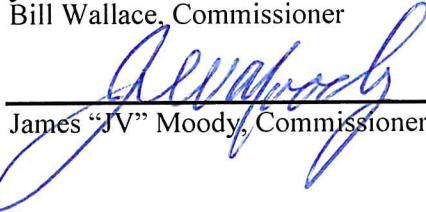
Date



Bill Wallace, Commissioner

5-13-25

Date



James "JV" Moody, Commissioner

05-13-25

Date

MISSION STATEMENT:

The goal of the Sweet Grass County DUI Task Force is to reduce impaired driving including the number of alcohol and drug-related motor vehicle crashes, injuries, and deaths in Sweet Grass County by implementing the methods and strategies outlined below. Efforts chosen by volunteer members may include, but are not limited to: prevention, consequences, healthy choices, compliance, enforcement, evaluation, and cooperative community involvement.

2024 CITY COURT DATA (source – Big Timber City Court)

Charge	Guilty	Dismissed	Bond Forfeited	Pending Disposition	Remanded to a Different Court
Possession under age 0 Filings					
DUI 10 Filings	5 (50%)	1 (10%)		3 (30%)	1 (10%)
Open Alcohol in Car 4 Filings	1 (25%)	2 (50%)		1 (25%)	
Marijuana in car 0 Filings					

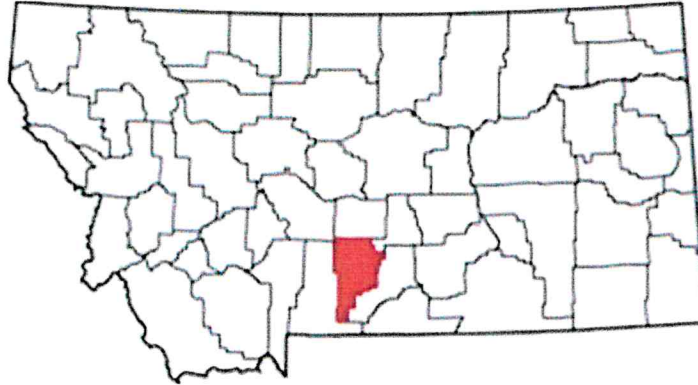
2024 JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT DATA (source – SGC JP Court)

Charge	Guilty	Dismissed	Bond Forfeited	Pending Disposition	Remanded to a Different Court
Possession under age 0 Filings					
DUI 14 Filings	9 (64%)			3 (22%)	2 (14%)
Open Alcohol in Car 5 Filings		3 (60%)	2 (40%)		
Marijuana in car 6 Filings			5 (83%)	1 (17%)	

2024 DISTRICT COURT DATA ((source – SGC District Court)

Charge	Guilty	Dismissed	Bond Forfeited	Pending Disposition	Remanded to a Different Court
Possession under age 0 Filings					
DUI 0 Filings					
DUI – Felony 3 Filings	1 (33%)			2 (67%)	
Open Alcohol in Car 0 Filings					

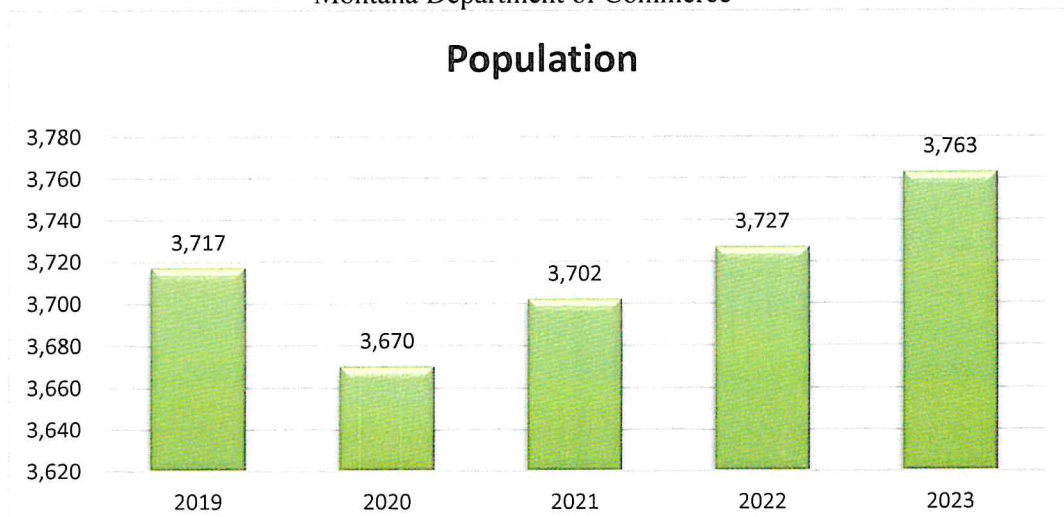
Problem Statement



Montana encompasses 147,042 square miles making it the fourth largest state in the United States. Throughout the state’s 56 counties there are 73,670 miles of roads open to the public for travel. Over the past five years from 2019 to 2023 the population in the state has grown by 57,317 residents with a population of 1,132,812 in 2023. With an increasing population and considerable amount of roadway miles brings a substantial number of vehicles to the state with the MT DMV reporting that in 2023 there were a combined 2,301,352 light vehicles, motorcycles, and heavy trucks registered. Along with the residents of Montana driving on the roads the University of Montana Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research reported that the state received 12,568,000 nonresident visitors in 2023. The extension miles of road combined with the residence of the state and the significant number of visitors utilizing the road network brings unique issues.

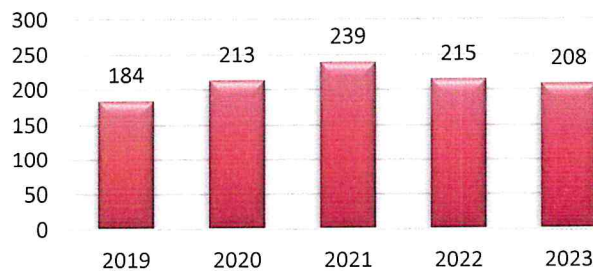
Sweet Grass County is ranked number 37 based on its size verses the other counties in the state and encompasses 1,862.2 square miles. Over the five-year period 2019 through 2023, after 2019 there was a decline in the county’s population however that decline reversed and since then the population has steadily increased year over year.

*Montana Department of Commerce

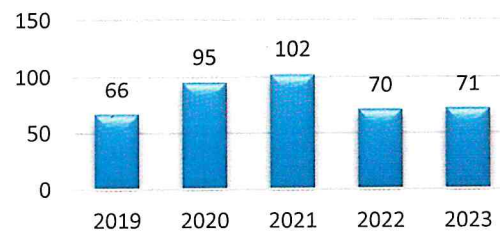


During the five-year period 2019 through 2023, there were a total of 1,059 fatal crashes on Montana roadways of which 404 or 38% included an impaired driving fatality where there was alcohol impairment with a BAC of 0.08+. During the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic the crash fatalities in the state rose, however this trend was consistent throughout the United States. In 2022 and 2023, fatalities began reducing more towards the pre-pandemic range. However, the state maintains a higher than the national average percentage of alcohol impaired fatalities compared to total crash fatalities. During the five-year period Montana’s saw a percentage of 38% whereas the national average for alcohol impaired fatalities verses total crash fatalities was 30%.

Total Fatalities in all Crashes



Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities (BAC = .08+)

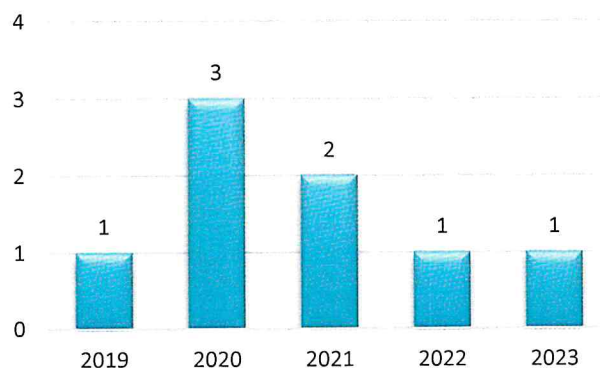


*NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System

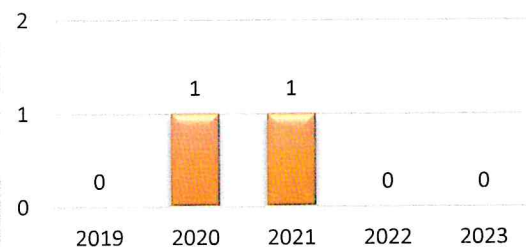
The county has incurred the following roadway fatalities along with the following fatalities due to alcohol impaired driving.

*NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System

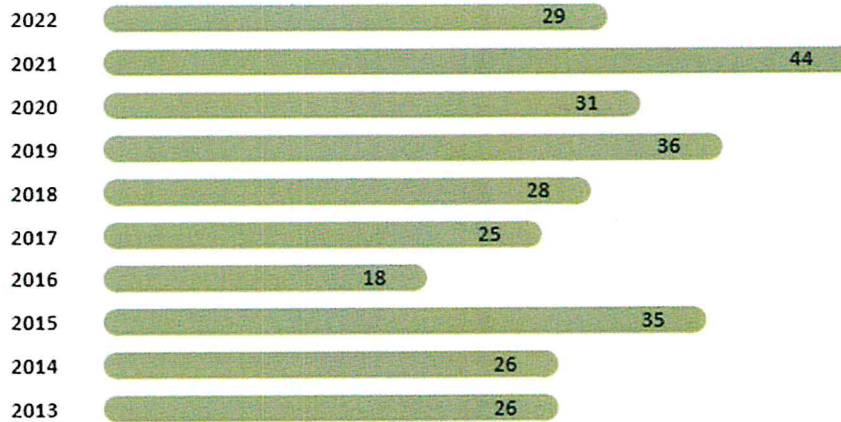
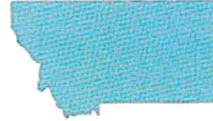
Total Fatalities (All Crashes)



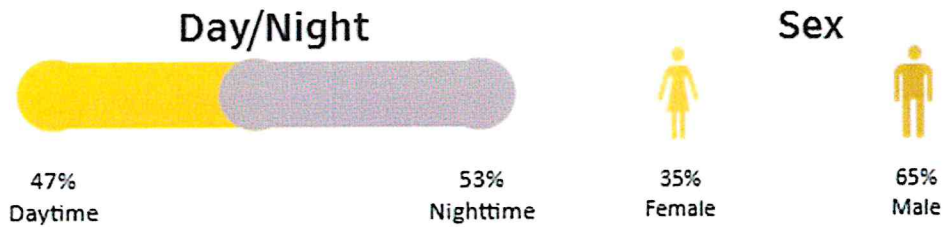
Alcohol-Impaired Driving (BAC=.08+) Fatalities



Montana
Fatalities Involving Young Drivers, 2013-2022
298



During the ten-year period 2013 through 2022, the state has seen rising and declining periods of fatalities involving drivers aged 15 to 21+ years.



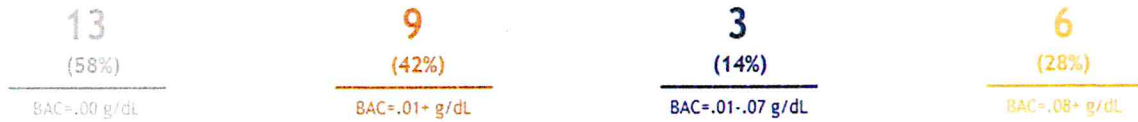
For the years 2013 through 2022, 141 or 47% of fatalities involving a young driver occurred during the daytime whereas 157 occurred at night. During the same period, 103 of the fatalities were female and 195 were male or 65% of fatalities involving a young driver.



The 298 fatalities involving young drivers consisted of 17 younger than 15 years old, 198 between the ages of 15 to 20, and 83 young adults aged 21+.

Alcohol Involvement Among Young Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes

Young Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Their BACs*



In 2022, 6 of the young drivers involved in fatal crashes had a BAC of 0.08+.

The Montana Highway Patrol reported the following citations between 2019 and 2023.

Highway Patrol Activity					
Citations Issued	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
D.U.I./Per Se	2,155	2,100	2,552	2,644	2,366
Seat Belt	8,522	7,262	2,017	10,272	8,942
Total Drug	1,588	2,207	1,151	1,470	1,400

In addition to the MHP citations the Montana Crime Lab also reported in 2023, methamphetamine continues to be one of the most prevalent drugs in toxicology’s casework. For postmortem cases, it was often seen when fentanyl was present. It was also found in 24% of all drug driving under the influence cases receiving full drug screens.

Case Type	2023 Cases	2022 Cases	2021 Cases	2020 Cases
Postmortem (Blood results only)	311 cases	229 cases	212 cases	191 cases
DUID	382 cases	408 cases	500 cases	408 cases

Fentanyl also continues to become a growing issue within the state. While still prescribed and used in hospital settings, fentanyl has flooded the illicit markets. Fentanyl is a synthetic opiate narcotic analgesic and is 40-50 times more potent than heroin. There was a 13% increase in its detection in postmortem casework. It was detected in 7% of drug driving under the influence cases receiving full drug screens.

Case Type	2023 Cases	2022 Cases	2021 Cases	2020 Cases
Postmortem (Blood results only)	128 cases	118 cases	87 cases	41 cases
DUID	99 cases	95 cases	57 cases	12 cases

In 2023, there were 3,703 blood samples submitted to the Montana State Crime Lab. Of those samples, where alcohol was detected, the average BAC was 0.182. For the year the highest BAC resulted in 0.565.

They also found that 69% of the samples were positive for alcohol, of which 59% had a BAC greater than 0.10.

Alcohol and Drug Prevalence in Driver Blood Samples (includes fatal crashes)	
Blood Samples Submitted	3,703
Blood Samples tested for drugs other than alcohol (drug)	1,624
Blood Samples Positive for Alcohol	69%
Blood Samples Positive for Drug(s) other than Alcohol	34%
Alcohol Detected Only	66%
Alcohol + Drug(s)	10%
Drug(s) Detected Only	25%
No Drug(s) or Alcohol Detected	5%
BAC Greater than 0.100%	59%
BAC 0.020% - 0.100%	10%
Average BAC	0.182, Range: 0.010-0.565 g/100mL

In summary, Montana total crash fatalities along with alcohol impaired fatalities peaked in 2021 and have since declined to levels more consistent with where the state was prior to 2021. The increase in fatalities around 2020 and 2021 was also consistent throughout the United States during that same period. While the state’s fatalities have declined during 2019 through 2023 Montana’s percentage of alcohol impaired compared to total fatalities still exceeds the national average. During this period Montana had a fatality rate of 38% whereas the national average was 30%.

In addition to the continued issue with alcohol impaired fatalities drugs and polyuse (drugs and alcohol) also have contributed to the states crash fatalities. The crime lab continues to find methamphetamine while testing driving under the influence of drug cases and rising cases of fentanyl.

The state also continues to have young drivers involved in fatal crashes. Of the 213 fatalities in 2022, there were 29 fatal crashes involving a young driver. And about 50% of the fatalities involving a young driver include the driver and about 28% of the fatalities are the driver’s passengers.

(source pgs. 3-7 – MT DOT)

COUNTY OVERVIEW:

Sweet Grass County is located in the South-Central part of Montana and has a population of 3,678 citizens according to the 2010 US census. Sweet Grass County has 37 miles of interstate, 28 miles of US Highway, 30 miles of State Highway, about 600 miles of county road, and includes the local streets in the city of Big Timber.

Within Sweet Grass County, a total of fourteen (14) liquor licenses are held:

Ten (10) On-Premises Licenses

Four (4) Off-Premises Licenses

American Legion	On-Premises	Nationally Chart.	All-Beverage	Catering All-Beverage
Big T IGA	Off-Premises		Beer/Wine	
Circle T Tap Room	On-Premises	Brewery	Beer/Wine	
Boulder River Road Kill LLC	On-Premises	Liquor License	All-Beverage	Catering All-Beverage
Bowling Alley City Club Lanes	License pending transfer	License pending transfer	License pending transfer	License pending transfer
Iron Star Pizza Company	On-Premises	Restaurant Beer/Wine	Restaurant Beer/Wine	
Lucky Lil's Casino	On-Premises	Liquor License	On-Premises Beer/Wine	
Overland Recreation Association	On-Premises	Liquor License	On-Premises Beer/Wine	
The Fort	Off-Premises			
Café 191	On-Premises	Restaurant Beer/Wine	Restaurant Beer/Wine	
The Grand	On-Premises	Liquor License	All-Beverage	Catering All-Beverage
Thirsty Turtle Tavern & Grill	On-Premises	Liquor License	All-Beverages	Catering All-Beverage
Timber Bar	On-Premises	Liquor License	All-Beverage	Catering All-Beverage
Town Pump #1	Off-Premises			
Town Pump #2	Off-Premises		Beer/Wine	

GOAL:

The goal of the Sweet Grass County DUI Task Force is to reduce alcohol and drug-related crashes, injuries, and deaths within Sweet Grass County.

PROBLEM:

Sweet Grass County continues to see infractions of the law involving youth and adults while using intoxicating substances. The DUI Task Force members have again committed the time and

resources necessary to address the issues with-in the county. Funding is a challenge. The Task Force is researching various sources of funding and partnering with other offices.

DUI TASK FORCE BOARD:

The DUI Task Force is made up of members from different facets of DUI enforcement and prevention, and local business owners within Sweet Grass County. Members and contact information are listed at the end of this plan.

The Sweet Grass County DUI Task Force will meet in Big Timber at 11:00 a.m. in the meeting room of the County Courthouse (200 W 1st Ave) or at the Ambulance Hall (220 W 1st AVE) depending on availability of each. The meetings will be held quarterly on the fourth Wednesday of March, June, September, December; or as needed. The meetings will be announced via the Big Timber Pioneer, social media, and e-mail. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Increase public knowledge about the dangers of drinking and driving and the consequences associated with DUI's caused by over-service of alcohol.

Strategies:

- ✚ Use the Big Timber Pioneer, public schools, and Social Media to educate and build awareness.
- ✚ Create a strong presence throughout Sweet Grass County by recruiting and retaining Task Force members from the whole county and remaining active as a board.
- ✚ Work closely with the newly hired County Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist

2. Decrease the number of underage DUI offenders and deter underage youth from impaired driving.

Strategies:

- ✚ Distribute information and materials regarding impaired driving to parents through local programs via materials from the National Child Safety Council.
- ✚ Continue to support and encourage non-alcohol related parties sponsored by parents for youth, such as the RAD Grad, and After-Prom Parties.
- ✚ Fund a \$1,000.00 scholarship to a graduating Sweet grass County Senior who will write the best essay on how they will avoid the peer pressure of underage drinking and drugs after graduation in their life. (Applications for the scholarship will be available February 1, 2023 and must be returned to the DUI Task Force by April 30, 2023). The winner will be announced at the end of May and the other participants will receive a thank you letter from the Task Force for applying.

3. Deter drivers from driving under the influence in Sweet Grass County and decrease the number of DUI incidents.

Strategies:

- ✚ Coordinate six (6) saturated DUI patrols for local officers to make a presence in our community on known alcohol related events, i.e., summer holidays (Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day) Boat Float weekend, Rodeo weekend, and Graduation weekend.

- ✚ The Sweet Grass County DUI Task Force, along with county law enforcement will continue to focus on prevention, education and awareness. Educational information in the tangible and verbal form (forums & speech) will be provided to the public to enhance our efforts to increase community awareness of the consequences of driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- ✚ In conjunction with local law enforcement, a “safe ride” program will be promoted around the county for anyone that may need a ride home.

4. Reduce the over service of alcohol in bars and restaurants in Sweet Grass County.

Strategies:

- ✚ Continue to work with Billings Police Department on holding compliance checks on a regular basis.
- ✚ Speak with local bar owners about being compliant with the server training laws and offer the RASS class if any of the owners are interested.

2025-2026 FISCAL BUDGET ESTIMATE

DESCRIPTION	INCOME	ANNUAL EXPENSE	TOTAL
Salaries and Wages			
DUI Patrol			
MIP Party Patrol			
Coordinator Salary			
Salary Expenses			
		Salaries & Wages	\$0.00
Office Expenses			
Office Supplies			
Memberships			
Postage			
Freight & Shipping			
Printing			
		Office Expenses	\$0.00
Policy & Legislation			
Compliance Checks		\$1000.00	
Meeting Expenses			
RASS Training			
Travel & Meals			
		Policy & Legislation	\$1000.00
Education/Awareness			
Scholarship		\$1000.00	
Publicity/advertising		\$2500.00	
Videos/Flyers		\$1500.00	
Sponsor bus rides home		\$1500.00	
		Education/Awareness	\$6500.00
Enforcement/Prosecution/Adjudication			
No equipment identified		\$3415.00	
		En/Pro/Adj	\$3,415.00
		TOTAL Expenses	\$7500.00
Projected Cash Forward from FY 24	\$13,915.00		
Projected Income 2024-2025	\$ 3,000.00		
TOTAL PROJECTED BUDGET FOR FY2025-2026	\$16,915.00		\$16,915.00

ACTIVE MEMBERS for Sweet Grass County DUI Task Force

2025-2026

Alan Ronneberg, Sheriff
406-932-5143
aronneberg@sgcountymt.gov

Pat Dringman, Co. Attorney
406-932-4376
pdringman@sgcountymt.gov

JV Moody, County Commissioner
406-932-5152
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Corey Austin, SGHS Superintendent
406-932-5993
austinc@sgchs.com

Clifford Brophy, DES Coordinator
406-932-3011
cbrophy@sgcountymt.gov

Sweet Grass Co. DUI Task Force Calendar of Events

January

February

March

- TF Plan – Update for TF and present it at meeting (1st 2 weeks in March)
- DUI TF Meeting (4th Wed)

April

- DUI TF Special Meeting (Wed April 30th, 2025)

May

- TF Plan – Submit to Commissioners for approval (2nd week in May)
- TF Plan – Submit to State DOT for approval (3rd week of May or before)
- Holiday – Memorial Day (Last Monday of May)

June

- TF Plan due into State (1st of June)
- DUI TF Meeting (4th Wed)
- Event – Sweet Grass Fest (4th weekend June)
- Event – Rodeo (2nd weekend July)

July

- Holiday – Independence Day
- Event - Boat Float (1st weekend after July 4th)

August

September

- Holiday – Labor Day (1st Monday on September)
- DUI TF Meeting (4th Wed)

October

November

December

- Event – Lighted Parade (1st Saturday of December)
- DUI TF Meeting (4th Wed)
- Holiday – Christmas (December 25th)
- Holiday – New Year's Eve (Last day in December)

LEGEND: ■ DUI TF MEETING (Green) : □ DUI TF PLAN (Grey) : ■ HOLIDAYS (Lt. Blue) : ■ EVENTS (Yellow)