

# **Executive Summary**

**2023**

## **ALCOHOL and CRIME in WYOMING**



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

# Alcohol and Crime in Wyoming - 2023

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## INTRODUCTION

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. Information has now been collected from a total of 257,973 persons who were arrested in the field and subsequently detained in a detention facility in Wyoming during the last nineteen years.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the subsequent Delta and Omicron variants in 2021 and 2022 brought about extraordinary changes to everyday life. Four years afterwards, it appears that we have now entered the endemic phase of this virus outbreak – meaning that COVID 19 may never disappear and that it may be with us forever. It does appear that most citizens in Wyoming have now begun to resume a more



“normal” routine of daily activities. Wearing masks is no longer required or the norm and restrictions for large public gatherings or events are no longer in effect.



It should be noted that the increase in alcohol consumption in Wyoming that was evident during the pandemic has now seemed to have “leveled off.” (As reported by the Liquor Division of the Wyoming Department of Revenue.)

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 in 2020 and again in 2021 but has decreased slightly the last two years as citizens began to resume a more

“normal” routine of daily activities.

The Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police publishes 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>

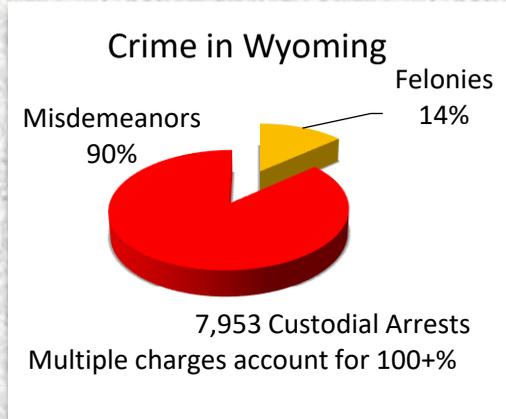
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 37. 15% of the time it was an out-of-state visitor and 6% of the time it was an in-state visitor.

Juvenile arrests resulting in detention in a detention facility accounted for less than 1.5% of the total custodial arrests (116 out of 7,954).

A review of the data collected from the persons arrested and subsequently taken to jail in 2023 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 is 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 14% 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 in the last ten years.

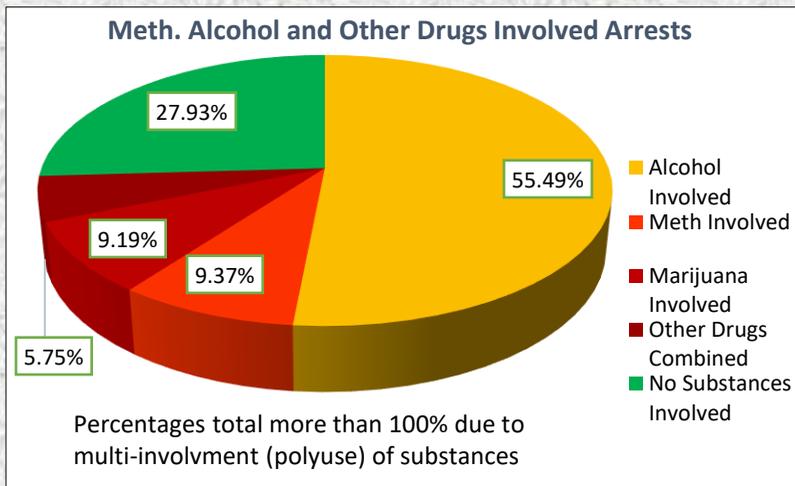
***Driving Under the Influence is, unquestionably, the crime that has the greatest impact and consequence in Wyoming. It accounts for the greatest number of custodial arrests and is the cause of more deaths and serious injuries than any other crime.***

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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 2023 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 has 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 745 meth-involved arrests in 2023 (there were 420 in 2011).
- ✦ The four counties with the highest number of arrests involving meth in 2023 were: 1) Sweetwater – 117; 2) Laramie – 114; 3) Fremont – 77 and 4) Natrona - 64.
- ✦ Marijuana-involved arrests have decreased in number and percentage since 2017. In 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 the number and percentage of arrests were less than in 2017: 14% (1,970) in 2017; 12.47% (1,542) in 2018; 12.09% (1,425) in 2019; 12.98% (1,092) in 2020; and 12.26% (877) in 2021. In 2023 there were 731 marijuana arrests (9%).
- ✦ The four counties with the highest number of arrests involving marijuana in 2021 were: 1) Laramie – 125; 2) Sweetwater – 91; 3) Fremont – 76; 4) Carbon - 74.



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### SUMMARY OF SUBSTANCE-INVOLVED ARREST STATISTICS FOR 2023:

- Alcohol and/or other drugs were involved in 73% of the 7,953 custodial arrests.
- Alcohol was involved in 55% of all custodial arrests.
- Methamphetamine was involved in 9.37% of the 7,953 reported arrests.
- Marijuana was involved in 9.19% of all custodial arrests.
- Drugs were involved in 21.88% of the reported arrests.
- Arrests for public intoxication accounted for 13% of all arrests.
- The average blood alcohol content for persons arrested for public intoxication was 0.2301.
- Driving under the influence arrests accounted for 32.47% of all arrests.
- The average reported blood alcohol content for DUI arrests statewide was 0.1616.<sup>1</sup>
- 51% 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 304 persons who were arrested for DUI after being involved in a traffic crash was 0.1710.
- 19.33% of persons arrested for DUI involved drugs.
- 26.72% of persons arrested for DUI had been arrested for DUI previously.



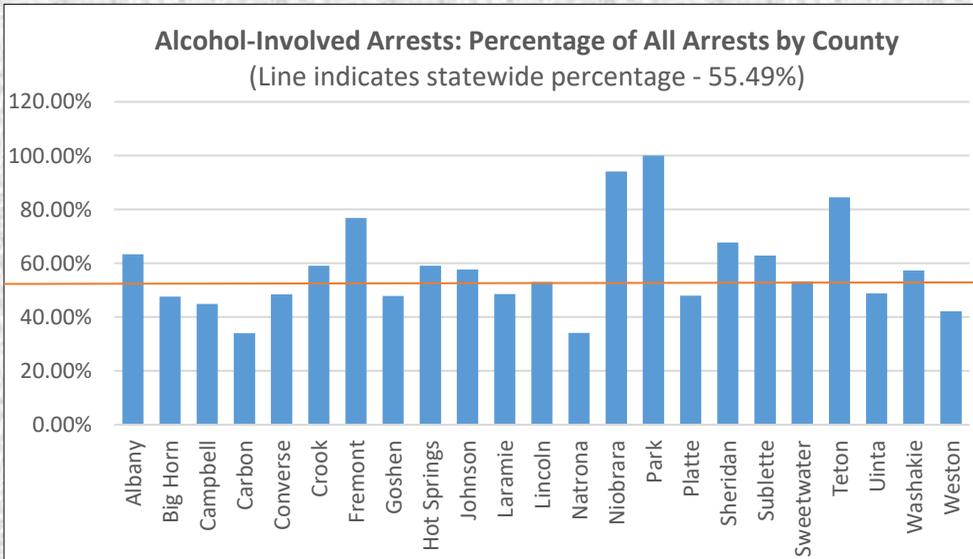
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<sup>1</sup> In Wyoming, a person driving with a blood alcohol content of 0.08 is legally presumed to be impaired.

# Alcohol and Crime in Wyoming - 2023

## Substance-Involved Arrests: 2019-2023

Alcohol Involved	Meth Involved	Marijuana Involved	Drug Involved	Public Intoxication
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
2021 4,060	2021 845	2021 877	2021 1,826	2021 1,136
2022 4,900	2022 814	2022 850	2022 1,927	2022 1,370
2023 4,413	2023 745	2023 731	2023 1,740	2023 1,062



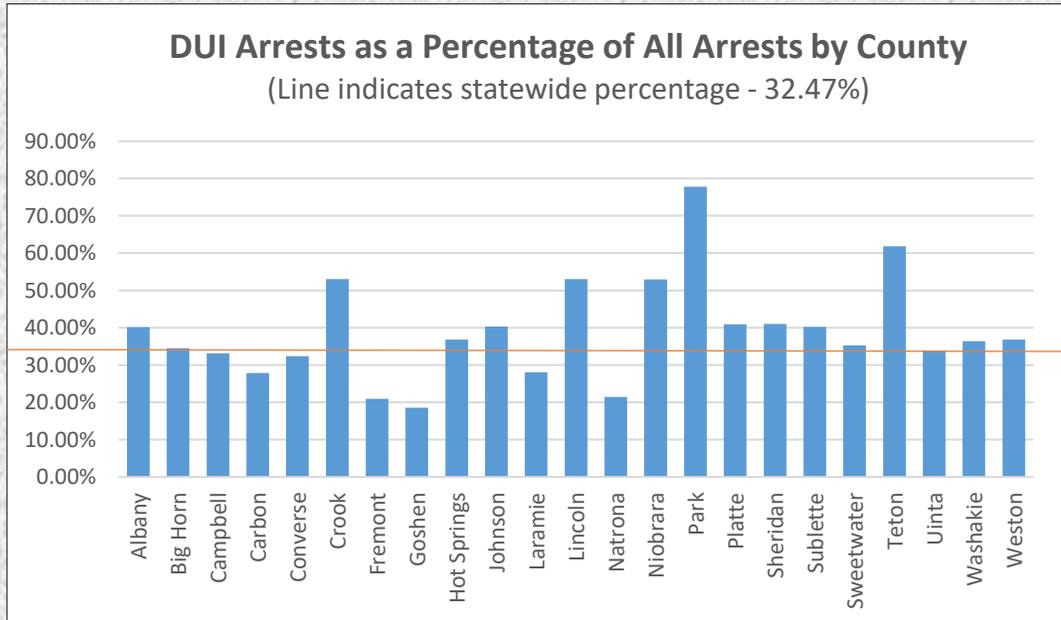
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**TRENDS IN ARRESTS FOR IMPAIRED DRIVING:** DUI arrests have accounted for an approximate average of 28% of all custodial arrests in Wyoming during the last ten years and a third of all traffic fatalities are the result of impaired driving.

- ✚ The statistics for persons arrested for driving while impaired mirror 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.

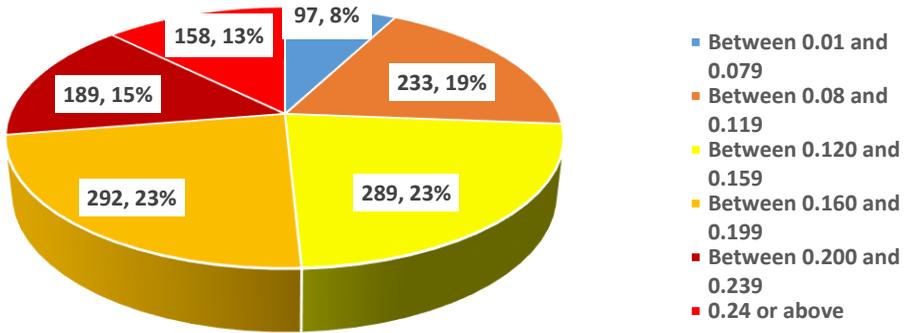


**DUI Arrests as a Percentage of All Arrests by County**  
(Line indicates statewide percentage - 32.47%)



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### DUI Arrests with Reported BAC in Each Range



### Driving Under the Influence Arrests: 2019 - 2023

Number of Arrests	% of Total Arrests	Average BAC	% of Drugs Involved
<b>2019</b> 3,275	<b>2019</b> 27.78%	<b>2019</b> .1564	<b>2019</b> 12.09%
<b>2020</b> 2,666	<b>2020</b> 33.35%	<b>2020</b> .1656	<b>2020</b> 15.53%
<b>2021</b> 2,315	<b>2021</b> 32.36%	<b>2021</b> .1639	<b>2021</b> 18.32%
<b>2022</b> 2,802	<b>2022</b> 30.86%	<b>2022</b> .1655	<b>2022</b> 15.60%
<b>2023</b> 2,582	<b>2023</b> 32.47%	<b>2023</b> .1616	<b>2023</b> 19.33%

# Alcohol and Crime in Wyoming - 2023

## 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 survey<sup>2</sup>.

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.

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- **Alcohol was a factor in 55% of the custodial arrests in Wyoming.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Teton – 84.54%
    - Fremont – 76.81%
    - Sheridan – 67.72%

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<sup>2</sup> Wyoming Alcohol Use Issues Survey, Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center, November 2012

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➤ **Methamphetamine was involved in 9.37% of the arrests statewide.**

- Counties with significantly higher number of arrests:

- Sweetwater – 117
- Laramie – 114
- Fremont – 77

➤ **Drugs (other than alcohol) were involved in 21.88% of the reported arrests statewide.**

- Counties with significantly higher number of arrests:

- Laramie - 380
- Sweetwater – 214
- Fremont – 186

➤ **Marijuana was involved in 9.19% of the arrests statewide.**

- Counties with significantly higher number of arrests:

- Laramie – 125
- Sweetwater – 91
- Fremont – 76

➤ **Arrests for Public Intoxication accounted for 13.35% of all arrests statewide.**

- Counties with significantly higher statistics:

- Fremont – 343 (29.90%)
- Laramie – 264 (15.31%)
- Sweetwater – 112 (13.30%)

➤ **The average blood alcohol content for all persons arrested for public intoxication was 0.2301.**

- Counties with significantly higher statistics:

- Lincoln – 0.3100
- Goshen – 0.2754
- Fremont – 0.2604



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- **Driving under the influence (DUI) arrests accounted for 32.47% of all arrests statewide.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Teton – 61.84%
    - Lincoln – 53.04%
    - Crook – 53.01%
- **19.33% of the arrests for DUI involved drugs.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Carbon – 31.40%
    - Uinta – 29.29%
    - Johnson – 27.59%
- **The average blood alcohol content (BAC) reported for 2,582 persons arrested for DUI was .01616.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Weston - 0.1820
    - Platte – 0.1738
    - Converse – 0.1715
- **The average BAC reported for 390 arrests involving traffic crashes that involved alcohol was 0.1710.**
- **53% of persons arrested for DUI had an average blood alcohol content of 0.16 or above.**
- **347 persons arrested for DUI had a BAC of 0.20 or above.**
- **158 persons arrested for DUI had a BAC of 0.24 or higher.**
- **26.72% of persons arrested for DUI had been arrested for DUI previously.**



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**April 2024**

*The Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police has been collecting and analyzing substance-involved data from persons who have been arrested and booked into county detention facilities in Wyoming since 2005. This project was managed by Johnson and Associates of Douglas, Wyoming. This report was authored by Ernest L. Johnson, Director of Services.*