

Omaha Ranked No. 1 in Nation for DUI Rates, Study Finds

Written by Mo Al-Ebadi

OMAHA, Neb. – A new study from LendingTree ranks Omaha first in the nation for the highest rate of DUI charges, with more than four out of every 1,000 drivers facing a DUI. That's more than double the national average of 1.9 per 1,000 drivers.

The study analyzed data from the nation's 50 largest cities using insurance quote information to determine where DUI offenses occur most frequently. Omaha's rate of 4.48 DUIs per 1,000 drivers topped the list, followed by several California cities including San Jose, Sacramento and Fresno.

Liene Topko, policy and research coordinator for Project Extra Mile, said the findings were concerning but not entirely surprising.

"It was surprising, but maybe not so surprising," Topko said. "Nebraska as a state doesn't do so well with impaired driving."

Project Extra Mile, based in Omaha, partners with law enforcement and community leaders across Nebraska to reduce alcohol-related harm. The organization focuses on prevention through compliance checks, education and policy advocacy.

Topko said alcohol's availability and the state's drinking culture are major contributors to the problem.

"Culture definitely plays a role, just because alcohol is available everywhere," she said. "Enforcement—they're so limited with what they can do."

Attorney Matthew Knipe, co-owner and partner at Liberty Law Group, said Nebraska's DUI penalties carry serious and lasting consequences.

"If you are convicted for a first-offense DUI, you're looking at fines, possible jail time, probation and a number of other things," Knipe said.

Knipe said the effects go far beyond the legal system.

"Don't do it. It's not worth it," he said. "You've got better places to put your hard-earned money than into an attorney's pocket."

The LendingTree study also found younger drivers, particularly those in Generation Z, are the most likely to be charged with driving under the influence.

Advocates say reducing Omaha's DUI numbers will take a mix of community awareness and stronger prevention policies.

"Behind the data are families, neighborhoods and decisions that affect everyone on the road," Topko said. "Tackling Omaha's DUI problem means changing habits, not just enforcing laws."