

MGC Research Snapshot

Assessment of the Casinos' Impacts on Operating Under the Influence (OUI) and OUI-Involved Traffic Collisions - January 2022

What you need to know

Among some tens of thousands of impaired driving “trips” to and from the Massachusetts casinos, there have been several dozen additional Operating Under the Influence (OUI)-involved crashes, mostly on roads patrolled by the State Police, within the three host communities. These outcomes are mathematically inescapable for locations serving alcohol to millions of patrons per year, although these numbers may be reduced by focusing on factors known to both encourage and suppress impaired driving.

What is this research about?

This report assembles available evidence on the impact of Plainridge Park, MGM Springfield, and Encore Boston Harbor on OUI in the region, OUI complaints, OUI-involved crashes, and reports of “last drink” locations from guilty drunk drivers.

Findings in this report are not meant to cast “blame” at any of the casinos, casino operators, or their employees, as a certain amount of impaired driving is inevitable in a society that allows liquor to be purchased and consumed away from home. The report simply seeks to quantify the contributions of the casinos to this specific type of social harm.

What did the researchers do?

This report looks at the relationship between Massachusetts’s three casinos and impaired driving. For this, various datasets were used:

- To look at the **number of OUI complaints** (arrests, summonses, and other methods of charging drunk drivers) reported by each participating agency, data

from the records management systems of the participating police agencies was used.

- To analyze **last drink data**, the author looked at the “last drink” reports from the Alcohol Beverage Control Commission from guilty drunk drivers.
- To analyze the **crashes with OUI charges**, the author used records management systems (RMS) and computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems of each participating agency.

What did the researchers find?

- As destination locations that serve alcohol, the **casinos produce a number of impaired driving trips every year.**
- The specific number of impaired driving trips depends on the **number of patrons**, the **average number of drinks consumed**, the **percentage of patrons leaving by car**, the **average distance traveled**, the **availability of transportation alternatives**, and **efforts by the casino and the police to control**



intoxication, to discourage impaired driving and to stop impaired drivers before they leave the casino.

- Many of the statistics associated with these variables are unknown, but both guesswork and evidence from past research suggest that **among the three casinos, the number of impaired driving trips is in the tens of thousands per year**. This is supported with available “last drink” reports from drunk drivers.
- These drunk driving “trips” likely translate into at least **a few dozen additional crashes**. Analysis of crashes with associated OUI charges shows increases on state roads within the three host communities as well as increases on some local roads in Plainville and Everett.
- Further research should be conducted after MGM and Encore have been open for longer periods, after COVID-19 is no longer creating havoc with drinking and driving patterns, and statewide datasets are available for alcohol-involved crashes.

About the researchers

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Key Words

Public Safety; Casinos’ Impact; Operating Under the Influence; Traffic Collisions

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About this Snapshot

MGC Snapshots are intended to translate lengthy and sometimes technical reports into an easily understandable overview of the research. The findings and recommendations in the Snapshot are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the position of the MGC.

