

## Alabama wake-up call: 'Wide-awake drunk' can lead to accidents

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

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It's quite a confusing culture that we live in. On one hand, most of us use caffeine to prepare us and get us through the day. That extra energy is sought after through coffee, tea and soda. But then, there is also a widespread dependence on alcoholic beverages to help people relax at the end of a day or work week.

So what do we need and want? More energy or relaxation? The recent popularity of alcohol-caffeine drinks proves that we want it all. Unfortunately, when alcohol is combined with a high level of caffeine the risks of alcohol abuse and subsequent [drunk driving accidents](#) increase.

According to an Alabama source, mixing booze with caffeine instills a false sense of capability among many drinkers. Sources call being intoxicated from an alcohol-caffeine drink "wide-awake drunk," meaning that an impaired person still feels that he or she is alert when they are legally drunk.

As you can guess, that misguided sensation of alertness fools someone into believing that he or she is good to drive. The combination drinks, therefore, are dangerous to the public, as DUI accidents become more probable with "wide-awake drunks."

Last November, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration got involved in the issue of alcohol-caffeine drinks, as concern over public safety regarding certain alcohol products became a popular focus nationwide. Companies were told to stop selling their energy-alcohol drinks unless they changed the contents of them to make them safer and FDA-approved.

While the FDA's involvement sparked progress, the risk of "wide-awake drunk" reportedly persists. Alabama's Alcoholic Beverage Control Board also prohibits the sale of alcohol-caffeine drinks in the state, but that doesn't mean that drinkers or bar tenders can't mix their own dangerous concoctions.

There is no proposed legislation seeking to outlaw individual consumers from combining energy drinks with alcohol, so that makes it even more important for people to truly learn the dangers of high-energy alcoholic drinks for themselves. Not only does the risk of drunk driving or riding with a drunk driver increase, but sources also report that those who drink the highly-caffeinated drinks are more likely to be taken advantage of sexually while under the influence.

Laws can be a great tool to protect the public from dangers, but when it comes to certain things, like alcohol, understanding and practicing responsible drinking is of utmost importance.

### **Source**

The Birmingham News (blog): "['Wide-awake drunks' who combine alcohol and caffeine drinks concern public health officials](#)," Kent Faulk, 12 May 2011