



RHA – Guide to Drink and Drug Driving

Road Haulage Association

30 November 2017

RHA Guide - Drink and Drug Driving

Are you aware that...?

- On average 2,000 people are killed or seriously injured each year in drink drive collisions.
- Nearly one in six of all deaths on the road involve drivers who are over the legal alcohol limit.
- In 2016 some 8470 casualties were due to drink driving alone¹.
- Drinking and driving occurs across a wide range of age groups but particularly among young men aged 17-29 in both casualties and positive breath tests following a collision.
- The drug driving law changed in March 2015 to make it easier for the police to catch and convict drug drivers.



Drink Driving Limits:

There are strict alcohol limits for UK drivers:

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the legal alcohol limit for drivers is:

- 35 microgrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath
- 80 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood
- 107 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of urine

In Scotland (from 5 December 2014) the legal alcohol limit for drivers is lower at:

- 22 microgrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath
- 50 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood
- 67 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of urine.

However it is not possible to say how much alcohol you can drink and stay below the limit. The way alcohol affects you depends on:

- your weight, age, sex and metabolism (the rate your body uses energy)
- the type and amount of alcohol you're drinking
- what you've eaten recently
- your stress levels at the time

¹ Dept for Transport Statistical release 28 September 2017



The consequences:

These are strict if you are convicted of drink driving, including:

- A minimum 12 month driving ban
- A criminal record
- A hefty fine
- Up to 6 months in prison
- An endorsement on your licence for 11 years

The everyday consequences of being caught drink driving can have much bigger impact:

- Increase in car insurance costs
- Job loss
- Trouble getting in to countries like the USA
- The shame of having a criminal record
- Loss of independence

The RHA say “Have none for the road”

Drug Driving Limits:

It is now an offence to drive with any of 17 controlled drugs above a specified level in your blood. This includes illegal and medical drugs. The limits set for each drug is different, and for illegal drugs the limits set are extremely low, but have been set at a level to rule out any accidental exposure (i.e from passive smoking).

Officers can test for cannabis and cocaine at the roadside, and screen for other drugs, including ecstasy, LSD, ketamine and heroin at the police station. Even drivers that pass the roadside check can be arrested if the police suspect that your driving is impaired by drugs.

The Morning After



- If you've been out drinking or have taken drugs you may still be affected by alcohol or the drugs the next day. You may feel OK, but you may still be unfit to drive or over the legal alcohol and drug limits.
- You could still lose your licence if you drive the next day when you're still over the legal alcohol and drug level.
- It's impossible to get rid of alcohol any faster. A shower, a cup of coffee or other ways of 'sobering up' will not help. It just takes time.

Goods Vehicle drivers should be aware that their livelihoods are at risk from drink and drug driving.

HGV Drivers taking overnight rest in their cabs are particularly at risk as they can still be breathe tested and if over the limit may face prosecution for being in charge of the vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Alcohol and Drugs affects everybody's driving for the worse. It creates a feeling of overconfidence, makes judging distance and speed more difficult and slows your reactions so it takes longer to stop.

Our advice is that if you are going to drive then DO NOT DRINK or take DRUGS and if you have Drank or taken drugs then DO NOT DRIVE.

Enforcement officers are taking action against HGV Drivers taking full weekend rest periods in their cabs and are therefore more likely to notice drink and drug drivers.

30 November 2017

Author: Colin Snape, Deputy Policy Director

Email: c.snape@rha.uk.net

