

## Drink driving and the law

You may think you're in control but any amount of alcohol affects your ability to drive safely.

The effects of alcohol on your driving can include:

- Slower reactions
- Reduced field of vision
- Poorer judgement of speed and distance
- Overconfidence and increased risk taking, increasing the danger to all road users including yourself

If you are convicted of:	The maximum penalty is:
Causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs.	14 years' imprisonment, an unlimited fine, disqualification from driving for at least 2 years and a mandatory extended driving test.
Driving or attempting to drive whilst above the legal limit* or unfit through drink.	6 months imprisonment, a fine of up to £5,000 and disqualification from driving for at least 12 months (3 years if convicted twice in 10 years).
Being in charge of a vehicle whilst above the legal limit* or unfit through drink.	3 months imprisonment, a fine of £2,500 and discretionary disqualification from driving.
Refusing to provide a specimen of breath, blood or urine for analysis.	6 months imprisonment, a fine of £5,000 and disqualification from driving for at least 12 months.

\*The legal alcohol limit for driving in the UK is 80 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood

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## There is no excuse for drink driving

### "I had a drink but it was at lunch time"

Even a small drink at lunchtime can make you more sleepy and impair your driving.

### "I feel fine to drive"

Any amount of alcohol will affect your judgement.

### "I've only had a couple"

Even a single drink will affect your driving performance.

### "I had a meal"

Alcohol just takes a little longer to get into your system, your driving will still be affected.

### "I can handle my drink"

You may think you can handle your drink, but you will have difficulty judging distance and speed. Your reactions are slower, so it will take you longer to stop.

### "I'm only going down the road"

A large proportion of all drink drive crashes occur within 3 miles of the start of the journey.

### "I'm driving slowly and carefully"

Alcohol actually makes you less alert.

# How much will your next round cost you?

**Directgov**  
Straight through to public services

**THINK**  
Don't Drink and Drive  
[www.dft.gov.uk/think](http://www.dft.gov.uk/think)

**THINK**  
Don't Drink and Drive

## What drink driving could cost you

- A court conviction
- A driving ban of at least 12 months
- An endorsement of your driving licence for 11 years
- A criminal record

If you get caught drink driving the consequences listed above are the minimum that will happen to you. You may also be liable to a fine of up to £5,000 and up to 6 months in prison.

But nothing on that list reflects the everyday consequences of being caught drink driving.

To understand that, you'll have to use your imagination.

So imagine for a moment relying on your friends and family to drive you wherever you need to go:

- Planning even the most basic trip to the cinema or shops around the local bus or train schedule
- Having to sell your car to pay a hefty fine or just watching it rust away for 12 months

Now picture yourself having to find a new job. Because without a licence you can't drive to work, or drive for work:

- Plenty of employers refuse to hire people with criminal records
- How will it feel explaining the story of your criminal record at every job interview you go to?

## It won't happen to me

Last year, around 100,000 drivers across the country thought they could get away with drink driving.

If you think you won't get caught, you're wrong. The police are trained to spot all the tricks drink drivers use to avoid being caught:

- They can ask you to take a breath test just for suspecting you've been drinking or if you commit a traffic offence whilst driving
- You don't need to be involved in a crash



## There's always an alternative

Most drink drivers don't plan to break the law. So to make sure you don't become another statistic, here are several ways you can avoid drinking and driving:

- Book a taxi. To make sure you get one, book it as early as you can in the evening
- At the start of the night agree who's driving and not drinking
- Use public transport routes to help you get home
- If you're at a friend's house, stay overnight
- Don't get into a car driven by someone else who's been drinking

## And the morning after...

Don't rush to get behind the wheel the morning after you've been out drinking. You may feel fine but you could still be over the legal alcohol limit\* or unfit to drive.

A cold shower, a cup of coffee or any of the other myths about 'sobering up' won't make you fit to drive any quicker. It just takes time to get the alcohol out of your system.

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