

# Impaired Driving

Impaired driving means driving a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In Kentucky in 2014, there were more than 4,300 collisions involving alcohol, resulting in over 2,000 injuries and 113 fatalities. There were more than 1,400 drug-related collisions, resulting in 939 injuries and 41 fatalities.

## Top impaired driving laws

### 0.08 Alcohol Concentration

- Alcohol concentration means either grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood or grams of alcohol per 210 liters of breath.
- A person's alcohol concentration can be measured through a blood test (BAC) or through a breath test (BRAC). If the test measures 0.08 or above, the person is legally impaired.

### Zero Tolerance

- It is illegal for persons under 21 to drive with a BAC of 0.02 or higher.
- Thirty-five percent of all fatal crashes for underage drivers involve alcohol.\*

### High BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration)

- High BAC refers to a driver with a BAC of 0.15 or higher at the time of the arrest.
- Fifty-eight percent of alcohol-related fatalities involve someone with a 0.15 BAC or higher.\*

### Open Container

- It is illegal for occupants to have an open container of alcohol in the vehicle, preventing a driver from passing the alcohol to a friend or putting it in the back seat when pulled over.
- States see a 5.1 percent decrease in fatal crash rates after passing an open container law.\*

### Repeat Offender

- Repeat offenders are those who have two or more impaired driving offenses.
- Creates enhanced penalties for subsequent offenders
- About one-third of all DUI arrests each year are repeat offenders.\*

### Ignition Interlock

- Requires repeat DUI offenders to blow into an ignition interlock device to start the vehicle.
- The vehicle will not start if the person's blood-alcohol concentration exceeds a 0.02 level.
- First-time DUI offenders are not required to have the device installed unless there is an aggravating circumstance, such as speeding or driving drunk with a child in the car.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control, ignition interlock devices reduce drunk driving re-arrest rates by 67 percent

## Did you know?

- **IMPAIRED** means your ability to think clearly and to react appropriately isn't fully functional.
- **DRUNK** means being visibly impaired, such as staggering or slurring your speech.
- **INTOXICATED** is a legal term, reflecting the amount of alcohol in a person's blood.
- You can be **IMPAIRED** by alcohol and other drugs long before you become **INTOXICATED** or **DRUNK**.
- The American Medical Association says the ability to drive is **IMPAIRED** at 0.04 or 0.05 BAC. At low levels of **INTOXICATION** you can "feel" more competent to drive than you did before you started drinking. This is a false security.

\*Source: Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)

## Definition of a drink

- A 12-ounce beer or wine cooler
  - A 5-ounce glass of wine
- A straight or mixed drink made with 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor
- A straight or mixed drink made with 1 ounce of 100-proof liquor
  - A shot of any straight liquor

## Definition of binge drinking

- Four or more drinks in a sitting for women
- Five or more drinks in a sitting for men



The metabolism of alcohol takes place in the liver. The body can burn approximately one-half ounce of alcohol in one hour. The liver eliminates approximately 90 percent of the alcohol from the body. The rest is eliminated through the lungs, perspiration, and urine. A cold shower or cup of coffee will not sober you up. The only thing that works is time!

## Alcohol myths and facts

**MYTH:** Beer doesn't affect my driving as much as other alcoholic drinks.

**FACT:** A glass of beer contains the same amount of alcohol as a glass of wine or average cocktail. Alcohol is alcohol—it's just packaged differently!

**MYTH:** Alcohol won't affect me much if I have something to eat.

**FACT:** Drinking on a full stomach may slow the progress of alcohol into the bloodstream, but overall is not much different than drinking on an empty stomach.

**MYTH:** Alcohol can't hurt me, except for giving me a huge hangover.

**FACT:** Large amounts of alcohol can do major damage to your digestive system. It can hurt your heart, liver, stomach, and other critical organs as well as taking years from your life. If you drink enough fast enough, you could die within a matter of hours.

**MYTH:** Drugs are a bigger problem than alcohol.

**FACT:** Alcohol and tobacco kill more than 50 times the number of people killed by cocaine, heroin, and every other illegal drug combined.

## Get the keys: How you can intervene

- First try using a soft and calm approach. Suggest they've had too much to drink and it would be better if someone else drove or they took a cab. Make light of it.
- If it's a stranger, speak to their friends so they may persuade the person to hand over the keys.
- Locate their keys while they are preoccupied and take them away.
- Tell them if they insist on driving you are not going with them. Volunteer to call someone else or a cab. Make it sound like you are doing them a favor.



### For additional information:

- **AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety:** [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org)
- **Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD):** [www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)
- **NHTSA Stop Impaired Driving Program:** [www.stopimpaireddriving.org](http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org)
- **The USAA Educational Foundation:** [www.usaaedfoundation.org](http://www.usaaedfoundation.org)

