

## Driving Under The Influence

Driving under the influence is defined as driving or operating a motor vehicle after the use of alcohol. It is also called drunk-driving or drink-driving. It manifests by the driver's physical impairment, like lack of reflexes, poor sight, the inability to walk straight, etc.

Driving under the influence (DUI) is measured by the blood alcohol concentration (BAC). The highest allowed BAC rate in most of the countries is .08, but this figure can differ slightly. This rate is measured either by taking a blood sample from the driver or from his breath.

The effects of the same quantity of alcohol upon two different persons can vary though. That's because of the differences in body weight, gender, alcohol tolerance, even mood. For example, a bulkier person will have more blood in his organism than a thin person and consequently a lower BAC.

As far as the estimative figures show, it's obvious that even a small drink can affect a driver's ability and increases the risk of an accident. Actually, a person with a BAC of .06 is two times more likely to die in a car accident than a non-drinking driver. When this number reaches .08, the drinking driver is 11 times more likely to die in a single vehicle accident.

In general, a person who is driving under the influence may present the following symptoms: exaggerate waving of hands, driving with the window down in cold weather, crossing over the lanes, slow but hesitant driving. If you see this kind of behavior on the road, it's better to watch out, because unpredictable things can happen.

Typically, a driver who is suspected of driving under the influence and is pulled over by the police is requested to take a few simple tests like reciting the alphabet and walking a straight line. Failing to do these tasks indicates a high BAC. Throughout the world, the highest BAC allowed evolves around .08, but differs generally from region to region. Let's take a look at these figures from different parts of the world.

### EUROPE

In the UK the highest BAC allowed is .08. In the rest of the western European countries, this percentage is generally .05, in countries like Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Spain, etc. There are also a few interesting additions, like in Austria for example, where the BAC allowed is .01 for drivers who have had their driver's license for less than 2 years and for those who drive vehicles weighing over 7.5 tons.

Also, as an interesting note, it's worth mentioning that some central and eastern European countries have zero tolerance when it comes to the alcohol quantity in the blood. This is the case of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine. Zero doesn't necessarily mean no drinking at all, it means beyond the point of detection. But taking into consideration that .05 percentage of alcohol in the blood is the equivalent of a small beer; beyond the point of detection is indeed only a drop or two.

### AMERICAS

In the United States, Canada and Mexico the magic number is .08. In the rest of the countries, these figures generally go from .05 to .08. This is the case of countries like Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, etc. The only countries which have zero tolerance are Cuba and Panama, while in the Dominican Republic there's (pay attention) no limit.

### AFRICA

In Africa, there are even more countries which have no limit. These countries are: Comoros, Congo, Ethiopia and Togo. There are also a few countries with zero tolerance, countries like Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Malawi and Nigeria.

### ASIA

The Asian countries have differences of their own, as in some countries drinking alcohol is illegal (Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan). In India there is no law in this matter. In the rest of the countries, the figures go as in the rest of the world.

In Australia the BAC allowed is different from state to state, but they all have a common factor: it can't be higher than .05.

So, as you may have already realized, drinking before driving is a very dangerous thing to do as it is responsible for a great percentage of all the road accident fatalities. That's why driving under the influence should be reduced as much as possible.

## About the Author

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