



MAG Position Statement

Drink Driving

History

Believe it or not the first drink driving law was introduced in 1872 and included penalties for driving a steam engine whilst intoxicated but it was in 1967 that the road side breathaliser legislation was introduced. In subsequent years the testing technology has improved and the legislation amended to reflect current trends and thinking in transport safety.

Drink driving accidents and casualties have fallen by approximately 75% since 1979 but in 2014 there were still 8220 casualties of which 240 experienced fatal injuries in drink related accidents.

Department of Transport statistics for 2004 to 2014 show a 40% reduction in the proportion of drivers involved in accidents failing breath tests. Over the same period the proportion of riders involved in accidents failing breath tests fell by 48%. Of those riders or drivers killed, car drivers are twice as likely to be over the drink driving limit than riders.

The Law

There are no guidelines on how much you can drink and drive without breaking the law. The way drink (and drugs) affects you depends on many factors related to weight, sex, metabolism, the type of alcohol, what you've eaten, and even stress. The limits in Scotland are different to the rest of the UK.

Level of alcohol	England, Wales and Northern Ireland	Scotland
Micrograms per 100 millilitres of breath	35	22
Milligrammes per 100 millilitres of blood	80	50
Milligrammes per 100 millilitres of urine	107	67

The penalties for getting caught are severe with unlimited fines and up to 14 years in prison for causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink. More details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/drink-driving-penalties>

In addition you might lose your job, experience relationship problems, have difficulty travelling to other countries (because you now have a criminal conviction) and when you do finally get your licence back your insurance costs will have risen dramatically. See www.drinkaware.co.uk for more information.

Currently

There are presently no plans to lower the drink driving limits in England and Wales to match those in Scotland. The Scottish authorities claim that you are 6x more likely to die in an accident if you are over the 50mg limit. Studies have shown that almost any blood alcohol increases the risk of accidents. Most countries with zero blood alcohol limits have done so for religious reasons (BBC News, Oct 2014).

MAG position

MAG abhors driving or riding whilst under the influence of alcohol (or drugs including so called "legal highs"). In the past MAG has questioned the leniency sometimes shown in courts where drink drivers have been involved in collisions where riders have been killed or seriously injured. There is no valid excuse for driving or riding whilst under the influence of drink or drugs.