



## Safety Bulletin 76

# Drink Driving over the Christmas period

Whether you're spending Christmas at home, visiting friends and family or having to work to keep the country going, there's always Christmas cheer to be found over the festive period.

It could be finding the perfect present for a loved one, or tucking into the first mince pie of the year: it's sometimes the smallest moments that make Christmas magical.

Unfortunately, not everyone gets this memo. Instead, some people see Christmas as an opportunity to do everything bigger, bolder and more excessive, which can lead to unsafe situations.

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*More than 5,500 drivers were caught drink-driving in December 2017, making that 179 drink-drivers caught every day! December alone counts for 10% of the UK's total drink-driving offences.*

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Men are five times more likely to be caught drink-driving than women. This data is from the Freedom of Information request by Confused.com to 41 UK police forces.

It shows a total of 57,613 motorists were caught drink-driving last year (2017). This is up 2% from 2016.

In fact, last year, 34,886 men were caught over the legal alcohol limit, compared to 7,061 women.

### Top five regions for drink-driving offences in 2017

1. North West – 10,121 offences
2. South East – 8,416 offences
3. Scotland – 5,765 offences
4. West Midlands – 5,332 offences
5. South West – 5,171 offences

## What you need to know about drink-driving

If you're driving, **don't drink**. If you're drinking, **don't drive**.

### What is the drink-drive limit?

In England and Wales, you're considered over the limit if you have over:

- 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood
- 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100ml of breath
- 107mg of alcohol per 100ml of urine

In Scotland, these limits are lower and more in line with other European countries:

- 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood
- 22 micrograms of alcohol per 100ml of breath



### So what's this in real money?

As a rule of thumb, two pints of regular-strength lager or two small glasses of wine would put you over the limit.

But this isn't a catch-all rule. Factors like your weight, sex, metabolism and how much you've eaten all contribute to how your body processes alcohol, so everyone has different limits.

- A pint of 4% lager eg Carling would be about 2.2 units
- A pint of 5.6% Leffe Blonde would be about 3.1 units
- A pint of 8.2% of Westons Vintage cider would be about 4.6 units

### Check your levels before driving

Though not a legal requirement in the UK, it's a sensible idea to keep a breathalyser kit in your car. They're a quick and easy way to let you know if you're over the limit.

Keep in mind that you still might not be safe to drive the morning after. You might feel fine, but there still might be enough alcohol in your system to put you over the limit.

## What are the consequences of drink-driving?



The punishment for driving under the influence is severe.

You'll be banned from driving for a minimum of 12 months. If you're convicted twice in 10 years, this goes up to three years.

You could also be put in prison for up to six months, and be forced to pay a hefty fine.

## Drink-driving bicycles and mobility scooters

What if you decide to cycle home after a night at the pub? What if you're riding in a roadworthy mobility scooter?

The legislation for drink-driving applies to all "[mechanically propelled vehicles](#)" e.g. cars, motorbikes and vans.

However, bicycles are not mechanically propelled, and mobility scooters are classed as "invalid carriages".

Neither require a driving licence, tax or insurance to use, and neither come under the same legislation that applies to cars.

While the strict laws around drink-driving don't apply to cyclists, it's still an offence to ride a bicycle "[while unfit to ride through drink or drugs](#)".

As for mobility scooters, you are required to follow the [Highway Code](#) when driving one on the road. This means that drink-driving laws apply to you the same as a car driver.

## What are the insurance implications of drink-driving?

Most insurers will have a clause stating that if you're in an accident while driving over the limit or unfit to drive through drink or drugs, your cover is invalid.

This means that you're not entitled to any payout from your insurer, and any other costs involved - eg a damage claim from another driver - would be your responsibility.





Having a drink-driving conviction will also mean you're likely to see a sizable increase in your insurance prices, and some insurers may refuse to cover you.

If you're a passenger in a car with a drink-driver and you're involved in an accident, any compensation you'd be entitled to could be reduced.

## Other options for getting home

So, what are the real alternatives that could help you get home after a night out without having to resort to drink-driving?

1. **PUBLIC TRANSPORT** - You could always use public transport. While you may not be dropped right at your front door, you'll get transported safely and for a reasonable amount of money.
2. **TAXI/UBER** - If you'd rather be dropped straight home you can pay for a taxi, Uber or other lift share service. This gives you the convenience of a door-to-door pick up, but obviously comes at an increased cost, especially at Christmas and New Year when taxi firms increase their prices for late night pickups.
3. **TEMPORARY CAR INSURANCE FROM 1 HOUR TO 28 DAYS** - Another option that could be worth looking at is temporary car insurance. This can prove a quick and easy option for some, as it enables a designated driver to take you and your car home after a night out. The car owner's no claims discount won't be affected.

## Morning-after calculator

Amanda Stretton, motoring editor at Confused.com, says: "Drink-driving can seriously impact the safety of our roads and put other road users at risk.

"Not only this, but it can land drivers with a fine or driving ban, which can have a negative impact on their car insurance premiums.

"With December and Christmas party season just around the corner, we've created a morning-after calculator.

"It's designed to give you an idea as to [how much alcohol is still in your system](#), and how long it typically takes to leave your body, indicating when you might be safe to drive.

"To avoid getting caught out, we suggest drivers stop drinking early if they know they have to get behind the wheel in the morning.

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*"But the best advice would be to avoid drinking alcohol at all."*

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Should you require any further assistance please contact us on [info@wpsafety.co.uk](mailto:info@wpsafety.co.uk)  
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