

# This holiday season, drive merry, bright and sober!



## Driving under the influence: effects, detection and consequences

The holiday season is in full swing, and celebrations of all kinds abound. However, amidst the merriment and festivities, it's important to remember you should never get behind the wheel if you're intoxicated. Here's what you should know.

### EFFECTS

Many of the skills required for safe

driving, such as sound judgment, acute concentration, impeccable co-ordination, pronounced visual acuity and quick reflexes, are impacted by drug and alcohol use. Consequently, being under the influence can result in speeding, driving off the road, swerving into oncoming traffic and dozing behind the wheel.

### DETECTION

Police officers use their training as well as what they see, hear and smell to determine if a driver has drugs or alcohol in their system. Plus, they can take a breath sample to determine a motorist's blood alcohol level. Police may

also issue a standardized field sobriety test (SFST), which typically requires the driver to walk in a straight line, stand and turn or stand on one leg.

### CONSEQUENCES

If you're caught driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, you could have your licence suspended following your arrest, even before being convicted.

Once convicted, the severity of your sentence will depend on your background and the circumstances surrounding your arrest. For instance, you could receive a hefty fine and jail time if you injured or killed someone.

To avoid collisions and other serious consequences of getting behind the wheel while under the influence, make sure you drive responsibly. (Newspaper Toolbox)



## Did you know?

Mixing alcohol with drugs (prescription medication included) leads to a greater impairment of cognitive functions, increasing your risk of causing a crash.

Your blood alcohol level can continue to increase up to 90 minutes after you've consumed your last drink of the evening.

There's no foolproof way to remove alcohol from your system. Taking a cold shower or drinking black coffee will not lower your blood alcohol content. Your body needs time to break down the alcohol naturally — it's the only way!

Going prolonged periods of time without sleep (more than 17 consecutive hours) is equivalent to drinking several alcoholic beverages.

That's why it's strongly recommended to avoid driving when sleep-deprived.

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