

# Fatal factors on the road

## Drugs and alcohol

Driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol can have devastating consequences.

One bad/poor decision can affect your family, your friends and other road users. Driving under the influence is an issue that faces regional and city folk of all ages.

Research shows that even though fewer teenagers are choosing to drink alcohol, those aged 12-17 who reported drinking in the last week, are doing so at harmful levels. We all have a responsibility to make sure our roads are safe - whether we are the driver or a passenger in a vehicle.

### How can alcohol and drugs impact our safety on the roads?

Driving is already a complex task, and driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs seriously impacts your ability to operate a vehicle. This can have negative consequences on the driver, the passengers and other road users.

The effects of alcohol and drugs can include, but are not limited to:

- » A sense of false confidence behind the wheel
- » Slower reaction times on the road or in the vehicle
- » An increase in risk taking behaviour and driving erratically
- » Reduced ability to judge speed and distance
- » Impaired vision and perception
- » Reduced co-ordination and concentration

Alcohol and drugs mixed together are a dangerous combination. Different drugs (even prescription) can have different side effects, and when combined with alcohol, limit the ability for the brain and body to function well.

It's not just illicit drugs that can be a problem. If you are required to take prescription drugs (medication) for health reasons and are not aware of the side effects, this can also play a part in reducing your ability to drive and jeopardise the safety of all road users.

### 'Can this medication affect my ability to drive a vehicle?'

If you are taking medication, it's important to consult your doctor and pharmacist about the side effects. It is a requirement by law to report a medical illness or injury that may impact your ability to drive. Not notifying the Department of Transport may result in a fine.



## Facts and figures



An average of 40 people are killed in alcohol related crashes every year in Western Australia.



The Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) for an L Plater and P Plater is 0.00%.



1 in 7 people aged 12-17 had reported drinking alcohol in the last week.

### Did you know?

Police have the power to stop suspected drivers if they suspect illicit drug use. If a driver is found with illicit drugs (such as cannabis) in their oral fluid, they may be charged a maximum \$500 and 3 demerits for a first offence.

If caught for the first time and charged with driving impaired under the influence of drugs, a maximum fine of \$2,500 and a minimum 10-month license disqualification can apply.

## Taking action to avoid drug and alcohol use behind the wheel

- » If you know or suspect a driver has consumed drugs and/or alcohol, do not let them get behind the wheel.
- » At parties and outings, think about a plan B before going, and always look out for your friends and others. Ensure there is a trusted designated driver or arrange alternative transport to get there and home safely.
- » Ask someone to pick you up - they would rather get a call from you than a knock on the door from a police officer.
- » Arrange accommodation ahead of time if you do not have a designated driver or alternative transport.
- » Choose not to accept drinks from unfamiliar people or people you don't trust.
- » It takes at least 2-3 years to get your full license. Once you are fully licensed, continue the habit of not drinking if you plan to drive, and encourage this amongst your friends.

## What is the legal blood alcohol limit to drive in western australia?

As an L Plater and a P Plater, the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of the driver is 0.00%. Once a driver attains their full license, they must have a BAC under 0.05%. The Road Safety Commission recommends that if you plan to drink, do not plan to drive. Every person is different, and there are a number of factors that may determine your BAC, including: the period over which the alcohol was consumed, their weight, how much food they've eaten and other health factors. It is always ideal to have a 0% alcohol intake before embarking on any drive.



**It is always ideal to have a 0% alcohol intake before embarking on any drive**

## Useful links

Road Safety Commission WA - [wa.gov.au/organisation/road-safety-commission/drink-and-drug-driving](https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/road-safety-commission/drink-and-drug-driving)

Alcohol Think Again - [alcoholthinkagain.com.au](https://www.alcoholthinkagain.com.au)

Drug Aware - [drugaware.com.au](https://www.drugaware.com.au)

Mental Health Commission - [mhc.wa.gov.au](https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au)

Department of Transport: Report of Medical Condition - [wa.gov.au/service/transport/road-transport/report-drivers-medical-condition](https://www.wa.gov.au/service/transport/road-transport/report-drivers-medical-condition)



RAC Community Education  
[communityeducation@rac.com.au](mailto:communityeducation@rac.com.au)

RAC Community Education is committed to delivering road safety education in Western Australia. We have designed programs to keep students safe on the roads by influencing risk reduction, increasing resilience and encouraging responsible behaviour. We deliver free interactive road safety workshops in schools and a youth road trauma awareness event in metropolitan Perth (RAC bstreetsmart) and regional WA (Project Road Smart).