



drinking and driving

Drinking and driving trends in B.C.*

- On average, there are 5,100 alcohol-related collisions each year in B.C. that cause 3,180 injuries and 116 deaths.
- Consistent with previous years, 62 per cent of all **alcohol-related crashes** occur on weekends (Friday, Saturday and Sunday).
- 48 per cent of alcohol-related collisions occur between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m.
- Alcohol is still one of the top-five contributing factors in fatal crashes.
- The 16 to 25 age group has the highest number of impaired drivers, accounting for 35 per cent of all impaired drivers in alcohol-related crashes.
- Males account for 81 per cent of all impaired drivers in alcohol-related collisions.
- October has the highest number of drinking and driving incidents, followed by November and December.
- Approximately 26 per cent of motor vehicle fatalities are related to drinking and driving.

* Statistics are based on police-reported incidents in B.C. and are annual averages from 2003 to 2007.

Facts about drugs and medications

Use extra caution when driving if you're taking any medications or drugs. Many prescription medicines and over-the-counter drugs can affect your skills necessary for driving, and may render you impaired under the Criminal Code. Drugs for cold, flu, allergies and nausea can cause your attention to wander, slow your reaction time and make you drowsy. When combined with alcohol, these drugs can be dangerous. Be sure you read labels carefully and check with your doctor or pharmacist about whether it is safe to drive while taking specific drugs. There are some instances where it's essential for people to take prescribed medications; for example, for certain medical conditions such as diabetes or epilepsy.

Drinking Driving CounterAttack

In 1976 — prior to CounterAttack starting — there were more than 300 fatalities from alcohol-related collisions in our province. Over the last five years (2003 – 2007), this has decreased to approximately 116 people annually.

Despite the progress we've made in making drinking and driving unacceptable, it still remains a serious problem. CounterAttack police roadchecks help protect people from the harmful consequences of impaired driving through the enforcement of all relevant laws and regulations. Police enforcement occurs year-round, with increased roadchecks during July and again during the December holiday season.

Protect yourself from drinking drivers

- Choose a designated driver before going out, keep money aside for a bus or taxi, or call a friend.
- Refuse to ride with drivers who may be impaired. Ask to be let out of the car if necessary.
- Take a stand and don't let people drive who are drinking alcohol.
- Drinking and driving starts with your first drink. Alcohol affects your judgment, reaction time, coordination and visual function; your ability to steer, track moving objects, brake appropriately; and ability to control your speed and lane position.



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Alcohol Myths and Facts

As long as I am under .08, I'll be okay to drive:

False. Drinking and driving starts with your first drink. By the time you reach .02, you'll start to have difficulty doing more than one task and keeping your attention and alertness. By the time you reach .04, your ability to react to the unforeseen will be affected as will your judgment about speed and safe distances.

If I eat a big meal before drinking, I'll be okay to drive:

False. While it's always a good idea to eat while drinking alcoholic beverages, a full stomach is not an effective defence against impaired driving.

Coffee, food or fresh air will sober me up enough to drive home:

False. No amount of hot coffee, cold showers or fresh air will sober you up. The only cure is time.

And you might be surprised to learn it takes about six hours for your body to eliminate all the alcohol from a blood/alcohol level reading of .08.

My insurance will cover me if I drink and then crash my car:

False. If you drive while impaired, you're in breach of your insurance policy. That means you're 100 per cent liable if you damage someone else's property or injure them.

There isn't much chance that I'll be caught if I drink and drive, and even if I am, the penalties aren't very severe:

False. If you have two previous roadside suspensions or one previous ADP, you'll also be required to attend an alcohol rehabilitation program and you may be required to install an alcohol interlock device in your vehicle. A criminal drinking and driving conviction can also land you in jail, affect job opportunities and your ability to travel outside of Canada.

Driving stoned is less risky than driving drunk:

False. Numerous studies have shown that "stoned" drivers can be every bit as dangerous as drunk drivers. Depending on what they've smoked, swallowed or injected, their impairment could range from slowed reflexes and flawed depth perception to hallucinations, psychosis and seizures. New legislation now allows police to test for drug-impairment and charge drivers who refuse to provide blood, saliva or urine samples when requested by police officers.



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