

DRIVING: UNDER THE INFLUENCE

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Surrey and Borders
Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust

i-access 
Drug & Alcohol Services

in partnership with


catalyst
HELPING PEOPLE CHANGE

in collaboration with the Alcohol Liaison Team at the Royal Surrey NHS Trust

DRINK &

DRUGS:

THE LAW ON DRIVING

“A person who, when driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle on a road or other public place, is unfit through drink or drugs is guilty of an offence”. The Road Traffic Act 1988 s4(1)

Drink Driving

There are strict alcohol limits for UK drivers but it's impossible to say exactly how many drinks this equals for each person. **The way alcohol affects you depends on your weight, age, sex and metabolism (the rate your body uses energy); the type and amount of alcohol you're drinking;** what you've eaten recently; your stress levels at the time.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the legal alcohol limit for drivers is:

- 35 microgrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath
- 80 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood
- 107 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of urine

Everyone is different, so it's hard to say how much alcohol you can drink and stay below the limit. **So if you're driving, it's better to have none for the road.**

How does the DVLA define alcohol problems:

If you have any of the below conditions, you **must not drive and notify the DVLA:**

- **Alcohol misuse** - when you drink in a way that's harmful to your health and wellbeing, or when you're dependent on alcohol.
- **Alcohol dependency** - difficulty in controlling alcohol use, drinking alcohol even when the consequences are harmful.
- **Alcohol related disorder** - including heart and liver disease as well as brain damage and disorders.
- **Alcohol related seizure** - a seizure or fit because of alcohol use.

Beware the morning after

You could be over the legal limit many hours after your last drink, even if it's the 'morning after'. Sleep, coffee and cold showers don't help to sober you up - time is the only way to get alcohol out of your system.

You must tell DVLA if you have an alcohol problem.

Drugs & Driving

It is **now an offence to drive with any of 17 controlled drugs above a specified level in your blood.** This includes **illegal and medical drugs.** The limits set for each drug is different.



Officers can test for cannabis and cocaine at the roadside, and screen for other drugs, including ecstasy, LSD, ketamine and heroin at the police station. Even drivers that pass the roadside check can be arrested if the police suspect that your driving is impaired by drugs. **Anyone found to have any of these drugs in their blood above the specified limits will be guilty of an offence,** whether their driving was impaired or not.



If you're taking any of the below drugs for medical reasons, you may still be able to drive, as long as taken properly prescribed and your ability to drive is not impaired. **Drugs included in the New Offence that might be used for medicinal purposes:**



Methadone - Morphine - Clonazepam - Amphetamine
Lorazepam - Diazepam - Oxazepam - Temazepam

Although only a few benzodiazepines and opioids are included in the list above, all benzodiazepines and opioids can impair driving ability. **The risk of driving impairment is increased if the medicine is taken with alcohol.**



Methodone and Buprenorphine Driving

Full compliance with an oral methadone / buprenorphine maintenance programme supervised by a consultant specialist **may allow you to drive after an assessment** and, usually, annual medical review. There should be no evidence of continued use of other substances, including cannabis.



What will happen if I still drive?

As professionals, we will write to your GP after assessment and every three months while in treatment. If it is discovered that you are continuing to drive against advice, the DVLA medical adviser will be informed and your medical records shared.

The road traffic act 1988 provides the legal frame work which outlines this as an offence.

What are my responsibilities?

It is your responsibility as a driver to inform the Driver vehicle licensing agency (DVLA) of 'any disability which is likely to affect safe driving'. This includes Alcohol and drug misuse or dependence and related symptoms/conditions.

You can be fined up to £1000 if you do not tell the DVLA about a medical condition that affects your driving. You may be prosecuted if you are involved in an accident as a result.

More information

For further information about fitness to drive and the DVLA requirements visit <https://www.gov.uk/alcohol-problems-and-driving>

Here you will find forms to declare your medical condition, how to surrender your licence and how to reapply.

Useful Websites

www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditionswww.haga.co.uk

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/52/contents

www.think.direct.gov.uk

www.catalystsupport.org.uk

Useful Contacts

i-access - Drug and Alcohol Support - Surrey

Laurel House

Farnham Road Hospital

Guildford, GU2 7LX

Phone: 0300 222 5932

Fax: 01483 302617

E-mail: rxx.iaccess@nhs.net

www.surreydrugandalcohol.com

DVLA drivers' medical enquiries

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DVLA

Swansea

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Phone: 0300 790 6806

www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla