

Driving under the influence drunk driving

What the law says

According to the penal code the driver of an engine-powered vehicle is guilty of drunk driving, if his/her blood alcohol content during drive or immediately after it is at least 0.5 per mille or he/she has at least 0.22 milligrams of alcohol per a litre of exhaled breath. The threshold for gross drunk driving is 1.2 per mille or alternately at least 0.53 milligrams of exhaled breath/litre.

Alcohol-related problems may be an obstacle for receiving a drivers license. EU directive mandates that license may not be granted or renewed to a person who is dependent on intoxicants and is not able to drive without being under their influence. The regulation encompasses both alcohol and other intoxicants.

Consequences

The penalty for drunk driving is a fine or incarceration for a maximum duration of six months and for gross drunk driving at least sixty day-fines or incarceration for a maximum duration of two years. The authorities also have a right to place a driving ban on a drunk driver and strip the driver of his/her license either temporarily or permanently.

Risks increase

Even a very low blood alcohol level has a negative effect on driving ability, thus increasing the risk of accident. As the blood alcohol content crosses the threshold of 0.5 per mille the risk for accident increases very strongly; once the threshold of 1.6 per mille is crossed, the drivers likelihood of being involved in an accident has increased 40-fold in comparison to a sober driver.



Burning off alcohol

Alcohol exits the blood stream through a burning process. The liver burns off pure alcohol at a rate of 1 gram per 1 hour per 10 kilos of body weight. The blood alcohol level depends on the persons weight. For women, an alcohol portion raises the blood alcohol level more than is the case with men, because their bodies feature less fluids.

To elevate the blood alcohol level across the drunk driving per mille limit (0.5 per mille), approximately three alcohol portions are needed. Alcohol portion (e.g. a bottle of beer, 12 cl of wine or 4 cl of spirits) contains 12-14 grams of alcohol. It takes about two hours for one alcohol portion to burn off the blood stream.

Even after the alcohol has left the system, the driver must be careful because a hangover has many adverse effects on driving skills.

Women 60 kg Liver burns off alcohol 6 g/h					
Portions	Blood alcohol content o/oo				
2	0.3	0	0	0	0
4	0.9	0.5	0.1	0	0
6	1.6	1.1	0.7	0.2	0
8	2.2	1.8	1.3	0.8	0.2
10	2.9	2.4	2.0	1.5	0.9
Burning off period	2-3 h	5-6 h	8-9 h	12 h	16 h

Man 80 kg Liver burns off alcohol 8 g/h					
Portions	Blood alcohol content o/oo				
2	0.1	0	0	0	0
4	0.5	0.1	0	0	0
6	1.0	0.5	0.2	0	0
8	1.4	1.0	0.6	0.1	0
10	1.8	1.4	1.0	0.6	0
Burning off period	2-3 h	5-6 h	8-9 h	12 h	16 h

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