

Key Messages

This electronic toolkit is a road safety resource intended to educate and inform Ontarians on alcohol and drug impaired driving. The contents of this toolkit are shareable.



Impaired driving – by alcohol or drugs – remains the leading cause of death on Ontario roads.

- Impaired is impaired – whether by alcohol or drug (including cannabis, prescription, over-the-counter or illegal drugs).
- Always have a plan for a safe ride home.
- It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure they do not drive while their ability is impaired, regardless of the substance.
- Impaired driving is a Criminal Code offence and you could lose your licence and possibly even go to jail.
- Impaired driving hurts us all – through deaths, injuries and property damage, as well as costs for health care and emergency response services.
- Refusing to take a drug or alcohol test when requested by the police will result in an automatic suspension.
- If your guests leave your home and drive while impaired, you can be held responsible if they injure themselves or someone else.
- Drivers impaired by drugs face the same consequences as drivers impaired by alcohol.
- Driving a vehicle while you're impaired by drugs or alcohol is illegal and dangerous. This includes cars, trucks, boats, snowmobiles and off-road vehicles.
- Cannabis affects your judgment, coordination and reaction time, and increases your chances of being in a collision.

Myths & Facts

MYTH: A drink is a drink - for both men and women

FACT: Gender, weight, age, mood and what you ate impacts how alcohol affects a person

MYTH: Guests have been drinking and using drugs at my party, but once they leave it's not my problem

FACT: If your guests leave your home and drive while impaired, you can be held responsible if they injure themselves or someone else

MYTH: Caffeine or food helps you sober up

FACT: There are no tricks to speed up elimination of alcohol – only time will help you sober up

MYTH: It's my medicine, so it's ok for me to take when driving

FACT: Impaired is impaired, regardless of whether it is a prescribed medication, cannabis or another drug. Talk to your pharmacist or doctor if you are unsure how your medication could impair your driving.

MYTH: Using eye drops, mints and cologne will mask cannabis use

FACT: Police examine the size of pupils and eye movement, that cannot be masked. The eyes give you away

MYTH: Using cannabis and alcohol together is the same as having a couple of drinks

FACT: When taken together, cannabis and alcohol can result in unpredictable reactions increasing your risk of collisions

NOTE: this information is only a guide. For official content, please refer to the Highway Traffic Act at [Ontario.ca/Laws](https://www.ontario.ca/Laws) or visit [Ontario.ca/DriveSober](https://www.ontario.ca/DriveSober).

Festive R.I.D.E.

R.I.D.E. stands for Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere. It is a sobriety testing program used by police across Ontario. It involves police setting up along a roadside and stopping vehicles as they attempt to pass in order to assess whether the driver might be impaired.

R.I.D.E. runs year-round, night and day, to deter and catch impaired drivers. During the holiday season, when we traditionally see an increase in impaired driving charges, police are out more frequently and with a larger presence.

This holiday season is no different, with local and provincial Festive R.I.D.E. running across Ontario from November 26, 2020 until Jan. 3, 2021

Detecting Impaired Drivers

Ontario has police officers who are trained to detect impaired drivers and remove them from the road. These officers can employ the following to detect and determine if a driver is impaired:

Standardized Field Sobriety Test

If a police officer suspects that a driver is impaired by drugs or alcohol, the officer may carry out a roadside standardized field sobriety test. If a driver fails the test, they can be immediately suspended from driving and face criminal impaired driving charges.

Breath Testing

A police officer in the lawful exercise of their powers can demand a breath sample at the roadside from any driver they stop, to determine the individual's blood alcohol concentration. If a driver fails the test, or refuses to take it, they can be immediately suspended from driving and face criminal impaired driving or related charges.

Drug Recognition Evaluation

If an officer has reasonable grounds to believe that a driver is impaired, a drug recognition evaluation may be carried out by a qualified officer at a police station. The test helps determine if the impairment is caused by drugs. If a driver fails the test, they can be immediately suspended from driving and face criminal impaired driving charges.

Detecting Alcohol/Drug Presence

Approved Drug Screening Devices

If a police officer suspects that a driver has drugs in the body, they may demand an oral fluid sample for the purposes of applying zero tolerance penalties. If presence of a drug is detected, young, novice and commercial drivers can be immediately suspended from driving.

Breath Testing

Breath testing devices can not only register whether someone is impaired by alcohol, but also can be used to determine if someone has the presence of alcohol for the purposes of applying zero tolerance penalties. If presence of alcohol is detected, young, novice and commercial drivers can be immediately suspended from driving.

Reporting Impaired Drivers

Ontarians are encouraged to call 9-1-1 and report any vehicle to police when they witness dangerous or erratic driving while on Ontario roads.

Calling 9-1-1 from a hand-held device is legal and is the only time that a driver can use a hand-held electronic device while driving.

Ignition Interlock

An ignition interlock device is an in-car alcohol breath screening device that prevents a vehicle from starting if it detects a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) over a pre-set limit of 0.02 (i.e., 20 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood). The device is located inside the vehicle, near the driver's seat, and is connected to the engine's ignition system.

The *Reduced Suspension with Ignition Interlock Conduct Review Program* allows eligible drivers convicted of a first or second time alcohol-impaired driving offence under the *Criminal Code* to reduce their licence suspension in return for meeting specific requirements, such as the mandatory installation of an approved ignition interlock device in their vehicle, attending a remedial treatment and/or education session, and pleading guilty within 90 days of the offence.

How Ignition Interlock works

Before you start your vehicle, you need to blow into the device. If your BAC is over the pre-set limit, your vehicle won't start.

Once your vehicle is started, the interlock device will ask you to provide breath samples at random pre-set times while the engine is running. If you don't provide a sample, or if your BAC exceeds the limit, the device will issue a warning, record the event and activate specific alarm systems (e.g. lights flashing, horn honking) until you turn off the ignition.

Penalties

Driving impaired by alcohol, drugs or both is dangerous and against the law in Ontario.

There are serious consequences:

- Immediate driver's licence suspension or even cancellation
- Immediate vehicle impoundment
- Fines and penalties
- Criminal record
- Education and/or treatment programs
- Ignition Interlock condition
- Increased insurance premiums
- Jail time

An impaired driving conviction could end up costing \$23,000 or more.

Throughout Canada, the **maximum legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) for fully licensed drivers is to be under 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood, or 0.08**. Driving with a BAC of 0.08 or over is a criminal offence and the penalties are severe.

In Ontario, you will also face **serious consequences if your BAC is 0.05 and above**. The range between 0.05 and 0.08 is commonly referred to as the "warn range."

If police determine that you are driving while impaired by any drug, including illegal drugs, cannabis, prescription and over-the-counter medications, you will face severe consequences and criminal charges.

Young and Novice Drivers

Drivers age 21 or under and novice drivers of any age (with G1, G2, M1, or M2 licenses) must not have any presence of alcohol in their blood when behind the wheel. This is commonly referred to as the "zero BAC" or "**zero tolerance**" rule.

Young and novice drivers are also prohibited from having any presence of cannabis in their system as well as other drugs that can be detected using federally approved drug screening equipment. That means that Ontario has a zero tolerance approach to both alcohol and drugs for all young and novice drivers.

Commercial Drivers

As of July 1, 2018, drivers of vehicles requiring an A, B, C, D, E or F class licence*, vehicles requiring a Commercial Vehicle Operator's Registration (CVOR) and road building machines are prohibited from having any presence of alcohol in their blood when behind the wheel of these types of vehicles. While operating these commercial vehicles, drivers are also prohibited from having any presence of cannabis in their system as well as other drugs that can be detected by federally approved drug screening equipment. This condition does not apply to commercial drivers operating

their personal passenger vehicles; this specifically applies to the operation of the commercial vehicle.

** Class A, B, C, D, E & F are specific classes of licences that require drivers to take additional training and meet specified criteria in order to drive larger commercial type vehicles. These vehicles include tractor-trailer combinations or local delivery trucks, as well as vehicles transporting passengers such as school buses, motor coaches or ambulances on the highway.*

Immediate Sanctions

If you perform poorly on any alcohol/drug screening test demanded by police, you may face immediate sanctions at the roadside such as having your licence immediately suspended, your vehicle impounded and be required to pay administrative penalties and fees prior to getting your licence and/or vehicle returned. If you have been charged with criminal impaired driving, you will also face additional consequences later if you are convicted in court. The sanctions and penalties you face can vary depending on your age, licence type, the amount of alcohol or drugs in your system, and how many times you have been convicted.

Visit the Ministry of Transportation's website for more information on [impaired driving penalties](#).

Impaired Driving

By the numbers

13,000

Most people don't drink and drive.

Yet, each year around 0.1% of Ontario drivers lose their licence for 90 days as a result of being over the legal limit of 0.08% blood alcohol concentration or failing/ refusing to comply with police demand for alcohol or drug testing. That is about 13,000 drivers.

drinking and driving collisions resulted in non-fatal injuries to more than

1,900

additional road users in 2017

12%
of total road fatalities involved drugs*

drinking and driving collisions claimed

133

lives in Ontario in 2017



In 2017, approximately 1 in 5 drivers aged 22- 24 who suffered major injuries in motor vehicle collisions in Ontario were impaired

7,000

Each year, about 7,000 people receive administrative licence suspensions for driving in the “warn range” with a blood alcohol concentration greater than 0.05%

*Based on 2017 Ontario collision reports

Impaired Driving

Digital

Digital Publication

Download from the links below:

[Alcohol or Drugs: Impaired is Impaired](#)

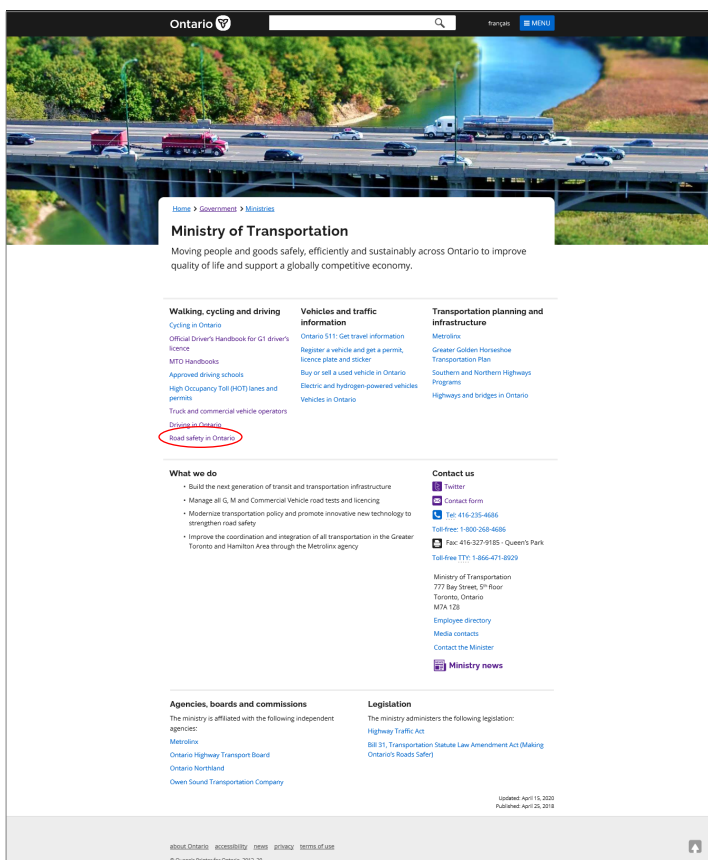
[Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers: Zero Tolerance](#)



Website

[Ontario.ca/DriveSober](https://ontario.ca/DriveSober)

[Ontario.ca/toohightodrive](https://ontario.ca/toohightodrive)



- 1 Visit [Ontario.ca/transportation](https://ontario.ca/transportation)
- 2 Select [Road Safety in Ontario](#)
- 3 Go to [Impaired Driving](#) or [Ignition Interlock](#)

Impaired Driving

Social Media

Re-tweet, like and share on your social media channels:

Release Date May 18, 2020

Social Copy Be safe, drive sober. Driving while you are impaired is illegal and dangerous. Learn more: <http://Ontario.ca/Drivesober>
#DriveSober #toohightodrive

Shareable



Link <https://twitter.com/ONtransport/status/1262473290079252480?s=20>

Release Date May 17, 2020

Social Copy Driving while impaired by alcohol, drugs or both is dangerous and against the law in Ontario. Know the risks.
Learn more: <http://Ontario.ca/Drivesober>
#DriveSober #toohightodrive

Shareable



**Drive
Sober**

Ontario 

Link <https://twitter.com/ONtransport/status/1262142560073588737?s=20>

Ministry of Transportation social media accounts:

 twitter.com/ONtransport

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