

**Harsher
penalties**

I m p a i r e d ?

**Don't
drive!**

Québec 



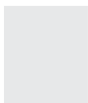
Why choose between drinking and driving?

If you drive with alcohol-impaired faculties, you risk severe penalties in addition to tempting fate; your likelihood of becoming involved in a fatal accident is multiplied:

- by 1.5 at .04 blood-alcohol concentration;
- by 3 at .08; and
- 30 times at .16.

On an annual basis, alcohol use is responsible for about 32% of fatalities, 16% of accidents involving serious injuries and 5% of minor injuries on Québec roads. Despite a marked decrease in impaired driving over the recent past, alcohol, along with speeding, remain the most frequent cause of accidents.

It is a personal responsibility to make sure that when we do drink, we have a safe alternative to getting behind the wheel of a motor vehicle.





Caution!

Driving ability is affected with the first drink.

Behaviour is affected starting with a single drink: alcohol, as do other drugs, diminishes your fitness to drive.

These substances change a driver's perception of reality and quickly affect your senses: you become light-headed and more daring, but also less attentive. Body movements become less accurate. Judgment is altered and your ability to quickly react to danger is considerably reduced.

Instead of being vigilant and on the lookout for possible danger by watching the road ahead as well as around your vehicle, you tend to focus on a single point or object, which makes it more difficult to foresee obstacles. You react only once they are directly in front of you, your movements become sudden and you may not be able to avoid an accident as a result.



What affects driving ability?

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant that lowers tension and inhibitions. Other substances, such as tranquilizers, sleeping pills, most allergy medications and other drugs have similar effects. By mixing medication or drugs with alcohol, you become a danger to yourself and others!

The effect these substances have on your body also varies according to your gender, weight and height. Other factors to consider include fatigue and stress levels, physical condition, heredity and consumption levels: the amount consumed, the rate of absorption, and whether or not you have eaten.

You've had a busy week, put in all those extra hours to meet employer or client demands, and a happy hour among colleagues seems like the perfect way to unwind. You are thirsty and have a quick first drink on an empty stomach. You feel the alcohol go straight to your head and become more talkative. When you go to the restroom, you find the alcohol has gone to your legs: you are now impaired!



Stress
Fatigue





It's a matter of time

Ninety percent of the alcohol we drink is broken down by the liver. Taking a cold shower, going for a walk, or dancing eliminates only a small amount of alcohol. Time is needed for the liver to do its work.

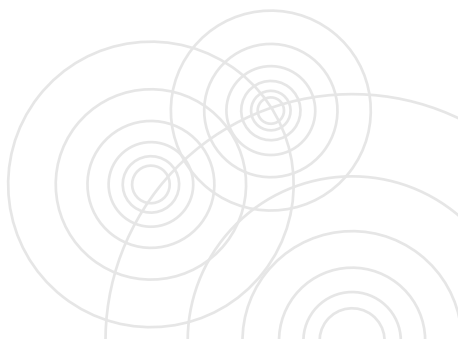
It takes much longer to metabolize alcohol than to drink it. Depending on the individual, the liver breaks alcohol down at an hourly rate of 15 mg, which is equivalent to an average drink: a glass of beer, wine or liquor. To eliminate 70 mg alcohol, therefore, a body needs about five hours on average



How do you recognize impairment?

The amount of alcohol in a person's system can be measured, but not the impairment itself. Alcohol levels in the bloodstream are measured in milligrams using a breathalyzer, which is calibrated and operated by an expert. Impaired ability to drive can be determined on the basis of certain behavioural characteristics of a person who has been drinking. This assessment is essentially the result of observation.

A person who has been drinking exhibits physical signs that point to impaired ability to drive: irritated eyes, more rapid breathing and sweating. The person may start speaking louder and faster, with some slurring, have difficulty standing up and walking in a straight line, or might even stagger and stumble. Someone who is impaired will seem distracted, answer questions slowly, make uncoordinated limb movements and even tend to fall asleep. Alcohol can increase sadness, make a person loud and aggressive, or provoke uncontrollable laughter.



Laws and Penalties

When someone is pulled over in Québec for driving while impaired, penalties apply on two levels: under the Criminal Code of Canada, a federal statute, and under Québec's Highway Safety Code.

CRIMINAL CODE		HIGHWAY SAFETY CODE
First penalty	Driving prohibition of 1 yr Possible ignition interlock use after a minimum driving prohibition of 3 months Fine of at least \$1000	Immediate licence suspension for 90 days Immediate vehicle impoundment for 30 days if the blood-alcohol level is in excess of 160 mg/100 ml or for refusing to provide a breath sample Licence revocation for a period of 1 yr ¹ Mandatory Alcofrein ² session Summary assessment of a driver's alcohol or drug habits to determine whether they compromise the safe operation of a motor vehicle. If summary assessment is unfavourable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comprehensive assessment⁴ • mandatory ignition interlock use for 1 yr after licence revocation once an assessment is satisfactory for the Société
Second penalty	Driving prohibition of 2 yrs Possible ignition interlock use after a minimum driving prohibition of 6 months Imprisonment for at least 30 days	Immediate licence suspension for 90 days Immediate vehicle impoundment for 30 days if the blood-alcohol level is in excess of 160 mg/100 ml or for refusing to provide a breath sample Licence revocation for a period of 3 yrs Comprehensive assessment ⁴ Mandatory ignition interlock use for 2 yrs after licence revocation once an assessment is satisfactory for the Société
Third or subsequent penalty	Driving prohibition of 3 yrs Possible ignition interlock use after a minimum driving prohibition of 12 months Imprisonment for at least 120 days	Immediate licence suspension for 90 days Immediate vehicle impoundment for 30 days if the blood-alcohol level is in excess of 160 mg/100 ml or for refusing to provide a breath sample Licence revocation for a period of 5 yrs ¹ Comprehensive assessment ⁴ Mandatory ignition interlock use for 3 yrs after licence revocation once an assessment is satisfactory for the Société
Accident* causing bodily harm	Imprisonment for up to 10 yrs	
Accident* causing death	Maximum life sentence	
Reference period for calculating a repeat offence		10 yrs
Other provisions		Driving while prohibited: vehicle impoundment for 30 days and fine of \$1885 to \$3760** Zero alcohol for holders of a learner's licence or a probationary licence.

*while impaired, with a blood alcohol level in excess of 80mg/100ml or for refusing to provide a breath sample.

**These amounts are subject to change and include fines provided under the Highway Safety Code, registry fees and a contribution to IVAC (Indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels). Please note that additional fees may apply.

¹See the SAAQ folder, "Criminal Code offences. Drivers' licences". ²**Alcofrein program:** driver education program recognized by the Minister of Transport. The aim of the program is to raise awareness about the problems associated with alcohol and drug consumption (session fee payable by offender). ³**Summary assessment:** aims to determine the likelihood of an individual's repeat impaired-driving offence (fee payable by offender). ⁴**Comprehensive assessment:** aims to identify the behavioural problems, establish a supervision and follow up plan according to the severity of a case and the individual's motivation (several meetings over a period of six to nine months, fee payable by offender). **N.B. :** assessments are conducted by recognized addiction rehabilitation centre professionals working in the health and social services network

Simple and effective solutions

Do not drive:

- Take a taxi: if you get a cab to go out as well as to return home, you won't have to worry about your vehicle, and can enjoy yourself without the question of safe travel looming over you;
- Use public transit: easily accessible in the city, a bus or the metro take you just about everywhere at little expense;
- Sleep over at a friend's place;
- Call on Nez rouge during the holiday season. Similar services operate in some areas the rest of the year. Taxi operators sometimes offer package deals. Find out more about these services.

Otherwise:

- Drink less and more slowly;
- Eat as you drink;
- Pace yourself;
- Don't be in hurry to get into your vehicle; take the time for the alcohol to be eliminated from your system by drinking coffee, some water or other non-alcoholic beverage.



**Don't let your friends
drink **and** drive.**

Insist!

Real friends do not allow someone to drive while impaired. Each of us has a responsibility to insist.

How?

- By making it clear you disapprove of drinking and driving.
- By sticking up for those who step in to prevent someone from getting behind the wheel of a motor vehicle despite their impairment.
- By proposing simple solutions. Preventing someone from driving while impaired is everyone's responsibility.

Combat **drunk driving**



**Société de l'assurance
automobile**

Québec 