



Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Huddle



Huddle Date:	07/02/2022	Ref:	SHE Huddle FY22 007 – Drink / Drug Driving
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Audience:	Processing	Delivery	Collections	Distribution	PFW	Specific Work Area
	All Drivers					

Overview:	Drink/Drug Driving is on the Rise
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Message

For decades, we have seen public campaigns highlighting the dangers of drink driving. Roadside testing backed up by driving bans built a culture where most people recognised drink driving as socially unacceptable, and casualties reduced as a result. In 2015, roadside testing for drug driving was introduced to identify drivers impaired by drugs.

Regrettably, recent evidence suggests that drink/drug driving is on the increase:

- 2019 data suggests that 7,800 people were killed or seriously injured by drivers impaired by drink or drugs
- 24% of people killed were impaired by drink or drugs (up from 19% in 2018)
- Police report that drink/drug campaigns in 2021 found a sharp rise in drivers found over the limit
- Employers report that 1 in 10 people driving for work, fail random drink and drug tests

The evidence points to more people driving impaired, more people getting caught, and more people being killed.

How do drugs and alcohol affect driving?

Different substances affect our driving in different ways:

- Alcohol slows reaction times, impairs judgement and increases confidence
- Cannabis slows reactions, affects concentration and causes fatigue
- MDMA (ecstasy) increases heart rate, causes an adrenaline surge resulting in over confidence and risk taking
- Cocaine causes over confidence and erratic behaviour. The next day can see flu-like symptoms, fatigue and lack of concentration
- Dissociative drugs (ketamine and PCP) cause muscle paralysis, hallucinations, confusion, agitation, panic attacks and memory impairment
- Amphetamines and methamphetamines e.g. speed, ice, crystal meth make people feel wide awake and excited, causing erratic behaviour and risk taking. Users have difficulty sleeping, so will also be tired for days afterwards
- Opiates - e.g. heroin and opium, have a sedative affect, slowing reaction times, reducing coordination and the ability to think clearly. They also cause blurred vision and drowsiness, nausea and vomiting
- Hallucinogens - e.g. LSD (Acid) and magic mushrooms can speed up or slow down time and movement, making the speed of other vehicles difficult to judge
- Many prescription and over the counter medications impair the ability to drive safely, for instance causing drowsiness, affecting reaction times, coordination, concentration or vision

What are the risks?

Impairment through drink or drugs means you are more likely to die or be seriously injured in a serious collision.

Here are a few examples of how much the risk increases:

- 3 times more likely with 20–50mg/100ml alcohol (below Scottish legal limit)
- 6 times more likely with 50–80mg/100ml alcohol (above Scottish legal limit)
- 11 times more likely with 80–100mg/100ml alcohol (above limit in England/Wales/NI)
- 2 times more likely to die or be seriously injured after using cannabis (16x if combined with alcohol)
- 2 to 10 times more likely after using cocaine or opiates
- 5 to 30 times more likely after using amphetamines

You can be prosecuted resulting in the following penalties (the same for both drink or drug driving):

- Minimum 12 months' driving ban
- Unlimited fine
- Up to 6 months in prison
- Licence endorsed for 11 years
- Causing death by dangerous driving whilst under influence – up to 14 years in prison

Other impacts:

- May affect your employment and employability
- Increased car insurance costs
- Difficulty obtaining visa e.g. for travel to USA

How do Police 'Detect and Test'?

Police can stop you at any time if they suspect you are driving under the influence of drink or drugs, if you've committed a traffic offence, or if you have been involved in a collision (regardless of whether it was your fault).

You can be required to take a breath test to check for alcohol and if you refuse, you can be arrested. If the test is positive then you will be required to take a further test at the station, and if that is positive you will be charged. If there is a medical reason why you cannot take a breath test, you will be taken to the police station for a blood test.

Officers can test for cannabis and cocaine at the roadside, and screen for other drugs including ecstasy, LSD, ketamine and heroin at a police station. Even if you pass the roadside check, you may still be arrested if the police suspect that your driving is impaired by drugs, and you may be taken to a police station for further tests.

What if I didn't mean it?

Unintentionally breaking the law is no excuse. It is your responsibility to ensure that you drive safely and lawfully.

Top tips:

- Don't drink or take drugs when you are going to drive – **NOT A DROP, NOT A DRAG**
- Book a taxi, have a designated driver, or be the designated driver – **mates don't let mates drive impaired**
- **Watch out for the morning after** – alcohol stays in your system longer than most people think. Home testing kits can help you decide if you are safe to drive (remember these are not 100% accurate)
- **Take care with prescription or 'over the counter' drugs** – check for any warnings that they may affect your driving or 'may cause drowsiness'. If you are in any doubt, check with your doctor or pharmacist.



Click the QR code for further information on Drug Drive Law

Actions

- 1) Managers brief drivers on the content above
- 2) Drivers ensure that you always drive in accordance with the [Royal Mail Driving SSOW](#) and the law

Supporting Information

See supporting information on the Royal Mail screens and Workplace.

If you have a problem with alcohol or drug dependency

In Royal Mail Group, support is available to colleagues who declare a dependency and cooperate with treatment and rehabilitation. All support will be treated in confidence and in line with other health referrals.

Where colleagues have a suspicion that an employee has an issue or they are considered to be at risk, they should raise this with their line manager in the first instance to ensure appropriate support can be provided.

Managers may make a referral to the occupational health service, or colleagues can contact the First Class Support service by calling 0345 266 5060, visiting www.rmgfirstclasssupport.co.uk or downloading the 'Lifeworks' app. New users of the website/app can sign up using a unique invitation code which is 'RMG-' and their pay number, e.g. RMG-12345678.

Full guidance and signposting to external support services is available in our Alcohol and Drugs Guide via the health policy and information pages on PSP.

