



## Chapter 6 ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS AND DRIVING

**PLEASE NOTE:** Tennessee is serious about educating the public on the tragedies of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. To underscore this, by law, at least 25 percent of the questions on the knowledge test must consist of questions dealing with this topic.

### Drinking and Driving

#### Alcohol and You

Researchers estimate that between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m., one of every 10 drivers is intoxicated. More than one-third of these drivers have been drinking at someone else's home. Nearly 50 percent of the drivers arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) are social to moderate drinkers. **Don't think that it won't happen to you.** In your lifetime, there's a high probability that you'll be involved in an alcohol-related crash.

#### An Overview Of The Effects Of Alcohol

Before you can fully understand why drinking and driving result in fatalities on the highways, you first need a better understanding of the effects of alcohol on the body.

#### How Does Alcohol Affect the Body?

Alcohol begins to be absorbed into the bloodstream within one to two minutes after an alcoholic beverage is consumed. As you consume alcohol, it accumulates in your blood. Intoxication occurs when you drink alcohol faster than the liver can oxidize it. As the percentage of alcohol in your blood increases, you become more intoxicated.

Once in the bloodstream, the alcohol is distributed to all parts of the body, including the brain and liver. Upon reaching the liver, the alcohol immediately begins to be oxidized. However, the liver can only oxidize about one drink per hour. Contrary to popular belief, this rate cannot be increased by drinking coffee, exercising, taking a cold shower or anything else.

**Only time can sober a person who's been drinking. And remember, it is a slow process.**

#### What Is Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)?

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is a measurement of the percentage of alcohol in the blood. The higher the BAC number, the more impaired a person is. **In most states, including Tennessee, .08 is the level of intoxication which is always illegal.** This means that for every 10,000 drops of blood in a person's body, there are eight drops of alcohol. BAC changes with body weight, time spent drinking, and the amount of alcohol that is consumed.

#### Amount of Alcohol Consumption.

Each drink consumed within an hour increases the BAC level. The more you drink in a fixed amount of time, the higher your

BAC will register. This happens no matter what you weigh — or what kind of alcoholic beverage you drink.

#### Rate of Alcoholic Consumption.

Drinking three drinks in one hour will affect you more than drinking three drinks in three hours. Spacing the drinks over a longer period of time will slow the rate at which you become intoxicated and indicates responsible drinking habits.

#### Body Weight and Fat.

The heavier the person, the more alcohol it takes to raise the BAC. Be aware of your size when drinking with others. If you are smaller than your friends and try to drink as much as they do, your judgment and inhibitions will probably be affected before theirs are.

Body fat also affects how quickly you are affected by alcohol. Alcohol is able to be absorbed in water, not fat. This simply means that people with less body fat have more water in which to dilute the alcohol. So, drink for drink, if people weigh the same, the one with more body fat will show signs of intoxication first.

#### Amount of Food in the Stomach.

All the alcohol consumed eventually gets into the blood whether you have eaten or not. Food in the stomach causes alcohol to be absorbed more slowly, slowing down the rate and the amount of intoxication.

#### Overall Condition of the Body.

Heavy and chronic drinking can harm virtually every organ and system in the body. The liver is particularly vulnerable to alcohol's harmful effects since it oxidizes approximately 90 percent of the alcohol in the body. If the liver is damaged or diseased, the rate of oxidation is reduced, causing the alcohol to stay in the body longer and the BAC to be higher for a longer time. Further, the effects of alcohol on the liver can lead to such diseases as hepatitis and cirrhosis.

#### Relationship of Alcohol to Traffic Crashes

Driving after drinking is a widespread problem. It is estimated that two in every five Americans (or 40%) will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives.

Each drink drastically increases your risk of having a traffic crash. Look at the table below.

**With a BAC of .10 percent, you are seven times more likely to cause a crash than if you were sober.**





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## Alcohol's Effects At A Glance

BAC	Rough Number of Drinks	Risk of Automobile Crash	Comment
.01-.03%	◇ 1 drink within 15 min.	Rises for young adults, others with low tolerance for alcohol	Stiff penalties for BAC as low as .02 if driver under age 21
.04-.07%	◇ 2 drinks within 1/2 hour	Definite risk for anyone with low tolerance levels	Most people feel high and have some loss of judgment. You may get louder and have some loss of small muscle control, like focusing your eyes.
.08%-above <b>LEGAL INTOXICATION*</b> — Judgment and reasoning powers are severely hampered; cannot do common simple acts. <b>Definitely unsafe to drive.</b>			
.10-.12%	◇ 4 drinks within 2 hours	Risk of automobile crash increases 7 times normal rate	Judgement loss increases. Many people claim they're not affected anymore, as if they would drink themselves sober when they are actually being affected more.
.13-.15%	◇ 5-7 drinks within 3 hours	Crash risk 25 times normal rate	You have far less muscle control than normal and feel happy, even though stumbling and acting foolishly.
.16-.25%	◇ 8-12 drinks within 4 hours	Crash risk 50 times normal rate	You are confused and need help doing things, even standing up. Alcohol-related highway fatalities sharply increase.

\*Lower levels are set for younger drivers, commercial drivers, and subsequent offenses, as discussed later in this chapter.

**As your BAC increases to .15 percent, your chances of causing a traffic crash increase to 25 times.**

**At .17 percent BAC, you are 50 times more likely to cause a crash.**

Behavior at each BAC level may differ somewhat with the individual. ALL people at the .10 percent level are definitely too impaired to drive safely. **Research has proven that driving skills, good judgment and vision are greatly impaired at BAC levels as low as .03 and .04 percent, especially for young drinkers.** The table, Alcohol's Effects at a Glance, describes different levels of intoxication and degree of behavior impairment at each level.

### Alcohol's Effects On Driving Ability

Driving involves multiple tasks, and the demands can change continually. To drive safely, you must maintain alertness, make decisions based on ever-changing information present in the environment and execute maneuvers based on these decisions. Drinking alcohol impairs a wide range of skills necessary for carrying out these tasks. Fatal injuries, resulting from alcohol-related traffic crashes, represent a tremendous loss of human life. **In 2005, over 16,000 deaths nationwide (39 percent of all traffic fatalities) were alcohol related. In Tennessee, 37 percent of all traffic fatalities (464 deaths) were alcohol related.**

The plain and simple fact is that you cannot drive safely when

you are impaired by alcohol. The two abilities most important to the driving task are **judgment** and **vision** — both of which are affected by small amounts of alcohol. Your ability to judge speed, time and distance are altered after only one drink. Each extra drink greatly affects your driving ability. In addition, your **reaction time** and **coordination** begin to deteriorate, while your **alertness** and **concentration** fade. All of this adds up to a deadly combination.

### Judgment:

#### Ability to Think Clearly and Make Quick Decisions

Good judgment decreases with the use of alcohol. The concern for physical well being also lessens. People under the influence of alcohol take unnecessary and dangerous risks. Examples are driving too fast, passing cars without enough clear distance and speeding around curves. Showing off is another example of impaired judgment.

### Vision:

#### Ability to See Clearly Straight Ahead, to the Side and at Night

Alcohol decreases clearness of vision. It reduces the ability to see clearly at night by more than half. Glare vision is poor because of relaxed eye muscles. Glare recovery is also slowed by alcohol. Side vision is reduced by about 30 percent at .05 percent BAC. Judging depth or distance is affected because



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alcohol causes each eye to get a slightly different picture. These vision impairments greatly increase the chances of a head-on or rear-end collision. Eye muscles are relaxed by alcohol and cannot focus properly. Because the eyes provide almost 90 percent of the information used in driving, any restriction in vision can cause disastrous results.

### Reaction Time and Coordination

**This is the ability to react quickly and safely to an emergency or hazardous situation—being able to keep eyes, hands and feet working together.**

Reaction and coordination are impaired by alcohol consumption as low as .02 percent BAC. It takes longer to react. **Coordination skills** to control the car with hands, feet and eyes in response to other vehicles and the road are drastically reduced as alcohol intake increases.

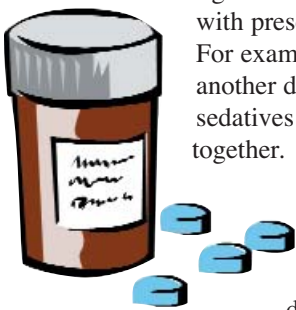
### Alertness and Concentration

**Being ready to react to changing driving conditions or situations, keeping your mind on driving and paying attention to the task at hand.**

Alcohol, in any concentration, is a depressant, not a stimulant. Alcohol slows all nerve impulses and body functions. The false feeling of stimulation that comes with small doses of alcohol is caused by the lessening of inhibitions. That's because the particular portion of the brain controlling this part of behavior is being relaxed. In reality, alcohol has the effect of fuzzing a driver's ability to be alert and to concentrate.

### “Every Day” Drugs

One of the most common and most dangerous instances of drug abuse occurs when people mix alcohol with prescription and over-the-counter drugs. For example, when alcohol is combined with another depressant, like tranquilizers or sedatives, etc., the results are not just added together. They are multiplied. Even some over-the-counter medicines can affect driving. The effects are much stronger, much more dangerous and can affect your driving skills.



If your doctor prescribes a tranquilizer or sedative, make a point to discuss how the drug will affect your ability to drive safely. **Just because a drug is prescribed is — by law — NO defense for driving under the influence of it.**

Non-prescription drugs, such as cold tablets, cough syrups, allergy remedies, etc., purchased over-the-counter may contain antihistamines, alcohol, codeine and other compounds that can be especially dangerous for drivers. Read labels and pay attention to warnings (e.g., “may cause drowsiness,” “do not

operate machinery,” “caution against engaging in operations requiring alertness”).

If you have questions about a particular drug or combination of drugs, check with your doctor or pharmacist.

### Driving Under the Influence of Drugs or Alcohol (The “DUI” Law)

Studies indicate that marijuana and other drugs also affect judgment and motor functions. This makes driving under the influence of drugs other than alcohol dangerous as well. In Tennessee, it is unlawful for any person to drive or be in physical control of an automobile or other motor-driven vehicle on any public street, highway, road or alley, or while on the premises of any shopping center, trailer park or any apartment house complex, or any place frequented by the public while:

1. Under the influence of any intoxicant, marijuana, narcotic drug or drugs producing stimulating effects on the central nervous system; or
2. While the alcohol concentration of the operator's blood or breath is .08 percent or higher.

**The defendant's ability to drive when using drugs may be sufficiently impaired to constitute a DUI violation.** A driver can register a BAC of .00 percent and still be convicted of a DUI. The level of BAC does not clear a driver when it is below .08 percent. If a law enforcement officer observes things, such as erratic driving behavior, or maintaining an inappropriate speed (too fast or too slow), it would be sufficient cause for stopping the vehicle to investigate. Further sobriety checks could lead to the conclusion that the driver was indeed “Driving Under the Influence” of an intoxicant, narcotic drug or other drug producing stimulating effects on the central nervous system, including prescription drugs. If you have any doubt about your ability to drive, don't get behind the wheel.

### Implied Consent Law

By law, when you drive in Tennessee, you have given your consent to be tested to determine the alcohol or drug content of your blood. This test must be administered at the request of a law enforcement officer who has reasonable grounds to believe you have been driving under the influence of an intoxicant or drug.

If you are placed under arrest and a law enforcement officer asks you to take the test and you refuse, the test will not be given. The court will send notification of action to the Department of Safety and your driver license will be suspended for twelve (12) months.

### Consequences of a DUI Arrest

Drinking and driving poses several problems. One is the probability of an accident, and another is being arrested for



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	Jail Time	Fines	License Revocation Period	Vehicle Seizure
<b>1st Conviction</b>	48 hours (7 days if BAC is 0.20% or more)	\$350-\$1500	1 year	Does not apply
<b>2nd Conviction</b>	45 days – 11 months, 29 days	\$600-\$3500	2 years	Vehicle is subject to seizure and forfeiture
<b>3rd Conviction</b>	120 days – 11 months, 29 days	\$1,100 - \$10,000	3 -10 years	Vehicle is subject to seizure and forfeiture
<b>4th or subsequent Conviction (is a Class E felony)</b>	150 days – max allowable for a Class E felony	\$3,000-\$15,000	5 years [to indefinite]	Vehicle is subject to seizure and forfeiture

DUI. The penalties for a DUI arrest are the same whether the driver was drinking alcohol or taking drugs (even prescription or over-the-counter drugs). If you are arrested for DUI, the consequences can be severe.

### Penalties Applying to Any DUI Conviction

Regardless of whether the conviction for driving under the influence is a driver’s first or not, several other laws apply:

- **IDs with “DUI Offender:”** If a person with a license revoked for DUI applies for a photo identification license to carry during the period before his or her license can be restored, the department is required to indicate on the ID that the person is a DUI offender.
- **Litter Removal:** A DUI conviction also requires litter pick-up for three eight-hour shifts. While removing litter, the offender has to wear a vest or other clothing displaying the message, “I am a DRUNK DRIVER.” If the offender is a Tennessee resident, the litter pick-up is done in his/her home county.
- **Vehicle Seizure:** A vehicle can be seized if a driver is charged with driving on a revoked license when his/her driving privileges are already revoked as a result of a DUI conviction (first or subsequent).
- **Vehicular Homicide:** If you are operating a motor vehicle under the influence of a drug or alcohol, and you are involved in a crash resulting in the death of another person(s), you may be charged with vehicular homicide. If convicted, you may be fined and sentenced to prison. It is possible to be imprisoned for many years.
- **Aggravated Assault:** If you are operating a vehicle under the influence of a drug or alcohol, and you are involved in a motor vehicle crash that results in the injury of another person, you may be charged with aggravated assault. If convicted, you may be fined and sentenced to prison.



- **Child Endangerment:** Known as the Drunk Driving Child Protection Act, there are added penalties for people who violate DUI laws when accompanied by a child under 18 years old. There is a mandatory minimum jail sentence of 30 days, and a mandatory minimum fine of \$1,000. Both of these child-related penalties are added onto any other incarceration, penalty and fines. If the child suffers serious bodily injury, the violation is a Class D felony, and if the child dies, it is a Class C felony of especially aggravated child endangerment.

### Additional DUI Penalties

In addition to the minimum penalties above, the judge will also require the following of the DUI offender:

- To undergo a drug and treatment assessment and receive treatment, as appropriate, for those who have had a prior DUI in the five years prior to the current DUI.
- Participation in an alcohol safety DUI school program, if available; or
- Participation in a program of alcohol or drug rehabilitation at a treatment facility, if available, for second and subsequent convictions; and
- The payment of restitution to any person suffering physical injury or personal losses as a result of the DUI, if the offender is economically capable of making restitution.
- The driver’s vehicle will be seized if he/she has two DUI convictions within five years **AND** both events happened after January 1997.

Courts may also limit the DUI offender to driving only a motor vehicle equipped with a functioning **ignition interlock device** (which keeps a car from starting if the driver’s BAC is too high). This restriction can be up to six months for a first offense, up to three years for a second offense and up to 10 years for third and subsequent offenses.



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Please note that a person with 2 DUIs in a five year period **MUST** operate a motor vehicle with the ignition block device for six months after reinstatement of driving privileges.

**Remember, driving while under the influence of drugs—even prescription drugs—carries the same penalties as for alcohol.**

### DUI's Are Expensive!

Besides being extremely dangerous and against the law, DUI's are costly. In addition to the fines and court costs, a person charged with DUI can be faced with posting bond to get released from jail, attorney fees, loss of time from work to attend court hearing(s), loss of time from work to serve time in jail, fees for alcohol safety courses and possible treatment, increased insurance premiums, and other expenses. This can add up to several thousand dollars.

### Young Driver Risks and Laws

#### Not Just Driving—Riding With Others!

Young people remain especially vulnerable to the threat of alcohol and other drugs. This is not only from their own impaired driving, but also from getting in the car with other drivers who are not sober. **TRAFFIC CRASHES ARE THE LEADING KILLER OF YOUNG PEOPLE, AND NEARLY HALF ARE ALCOHOL RELATED.** In a national survey, nearly half of 10th graders and a third of eighth graders reported having ridden during the past month with a driver who had used alcohol or other drugs before taking the wheel.

Crash records indicate that young drivers under the influence of small amounts of alcohol appear to have more driving problems than older drivers. Most teenagers are intoxicated at low BAC levels. The young driver's chance of a crash is much greater with BAC between .01-.08 percent than older drivers. This is due to low tolerance of alcohol and limited driving experience.

**THE DECISION IS YOURS. BE RESPONSIBLE AND SMART—HELP YOURSELF AND YOUR FRIENDS!**

#### Under 21 Laws

In addition to the standard penalties for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol discussed previously, there are three special laws that apply to people under the age of 21:

- **18-20 Alcohol Violations:** If you are 18, 19 or 20 years old and are convicted of purchasing, attempting to purchase, or possessing any alcoholic beverage, you will lose your privilege to drive for one year. If it happens again, you will lose your license for two

years. The law applies to any alcohol-related conviction, whether or not you were driving or even in a vehicle.

- **Juvenile Offenders:** If you are between the ages of 13 and 17 and are found to have possessed, consumed or sold either alcohol or drugs, your driving privilege will be suspended for one year or until age 17, whichever is longer. Even if you have never been licensed, you could lose your privilege to drive until you reach age 17. If you have a second conviction, the suspension is for two years or until age 18, whichever is longer.
- **Under 21 BAC:** A person who is at least 16, but is not yet 21 years old, and who is found: (1) driving with a BAC of .02 percent; (2) under the influence of alcohol; or (3) under the influence of any other intoxicant will be convicted of underage driving while impaired. Penalties for this conviction are: losing your license for one year, a fine of \$250 and sometimes, also includes public service work.

### Prevention Of Drinking and Driving

The best advice, of course, is simply to not drink when you know you are going to drive. One of the most successful programs in recent years has been the designated driver concept, where friends agree ahead of time which person will remain strictly sober. Many night clubs offer the designated driver free non-alcoholic beverages for the evening.



Young people, who do not want to drink in the first place, are finding it more socially acceptable to offer to be the designated driver.

#### Avoiding the Risks

**Alcohol-related crashes are not accidents. They can be prevented.** If you are planning a night on the town, decide before you start drinking that you are not going to drive. Remember, alcohol affects your judgment. It's a lot more difficult to make the decision not to drive after one or two drinks.

Use the following tips to keep from drinking and driving and still have a good time:

- Drive to social events in groups of two or more and have the driver agree not to drink.
- Arrange to ride with a friend who is not drinking.
- Before you start drinking, give your vehicle keys to someone who isn't drinking and who won't let you drive after drinking.
- If someone offers you a drink and you plan to drive, simply say, "No thanks, I'm driving."



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### If You Choose To Drink

If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, you should control your drinking to stay within your limit. Drinking in a responsible and mature manner means that you are aware of your physical and mental condition. You also:

- Set a limit in advance and stick to it;
- Drink at a slow pace;
- Watch for signs of impairment;
- Use time to get rid of alcohol.

If, despite your best intentions, you realize you have had too much to drink, consider using public transportation to get home. Taking a cab could be a lot cheaper than paying a fine or losing your driver license! Beyond taking a cab, you could:

- Offer the keys to a non-drinking friend;
- Stay overnight at the party giver's home or a hotel within walking distance;
- Call a parent or friend to pick you up and take you home.

### If You Are the Host

You assume a great amount of responsibility when you entertain your friends at home and serve alcoholic beverages. To help prevent the consequences of drinking and driving, you should do the following during the party:

- Encourage some of the guests to be designated drivers;
- Serve food, such as cheese and crackers;
- Always offer non-alcoholic drinks;
- Do not mix strong drinks or be in a hurry to refill glasses;
- Close the bar at least two hours before guests depart.

### DID YOU KNOW?

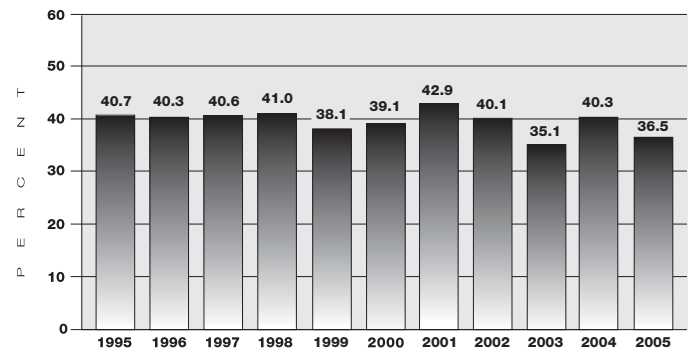
1. The amount of alcohol in one (12 ounce) bottle of beer is about equal to that in a (1 ounce) shot of whiskey.
2. When alcohol is consumed, it quickly reaches the brain where it, in effect, short-circuits the parts that control judgment, emotions and confidence.
3. The first thing affected after drinking alcohol is a person's judgment.
4. Reliable research studies show that two or three drinks of alcohol in three hours or less impair the driving ability of most individuals.
5. It takes about one hour to cancel the effects of one drink. It takes about three hours to cancel the intoxicating effects of three drinks.
6. Alcohol-related vehicle crashes are the number one killer of people under the age of 40.
7. Many drugs, even legal over-the-counter drugs, can impair your ability to drive. If you are taking them for a cold, they make you feel well enough to drive, but they can also affect alertness, judgment, coordination and vision.
8. The combined use of alcohol and other depressant

drugs, such as antihistamines, may be more dangerous to health and highway safety than the effects of either the alcohol or drugs alone.

### We Are Doing Better

Over the past few years, Tennessee has seen a progressive decrease in the percentage of fatal crashes involving alcohol. Prior to 1990, it was common for half of all fatal crashes to involve alcohol. Since then, there has been a decline. In 2005, the percentage was about 37 percent. This is an improvement over 15 years, but only safe driving and adhering to laws that prohibit drinking and driving will move this percentage down even further.

We Must Keep Trying



### Let's get this percentage lower!

NOTE: This chapter was written in consultation with the Tennessee Association of Alcohol, Drug and Other Addiction Services (TAADAS).

For further information on the general subject of drug and alcohol use and abuse, or for referrals for help with such problems, call the toll-free "Redline" at 1-800-889-9789.

Or, check the TAADAS web site: [www.taadas.org](http://www.taadas.org)

### Chapter 6 - Chapter Sample Test Questions

Here are some sample test questions. Because these are just study questions to help you review, you may receive a test with completely different questions, in whole or in part. Please note that 25 percent of your test questions will be found in this chapter. The page number for where the correct answer can be located for each question is shown.

16. Driving while under the influence of drugs carries:
  - A. The same penalty as for alcohol
  - B. A lesser penalty than for alcohol.
  - C. Absolutely no penalty at all.

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17. If you have had three beers in the past hour, about how long will it take for all the alcohol to leave your blood stream?



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- A. One hour
- B. Two hours
- C. Three hours

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18. As the percentage of alcohol (BAC) in your blood increases, you become:

- A. More intoxicated
- B. More sober
- C. More coordinated

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19. Implied Consent Law means:

- A. If asked, you will take a test to determine alcohol or drug content in the blood.
- B. The laws apply even without any signs, markings or signals present at an intersection.
- C. The owner of the vehicle will carry proper insurance.

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20. Which of the following driving skills are affected by the use of alcohol and/or drugs?

- A. Alertness and concentration
- B. Reaction time and coordination
- C. All of the above are affected.

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