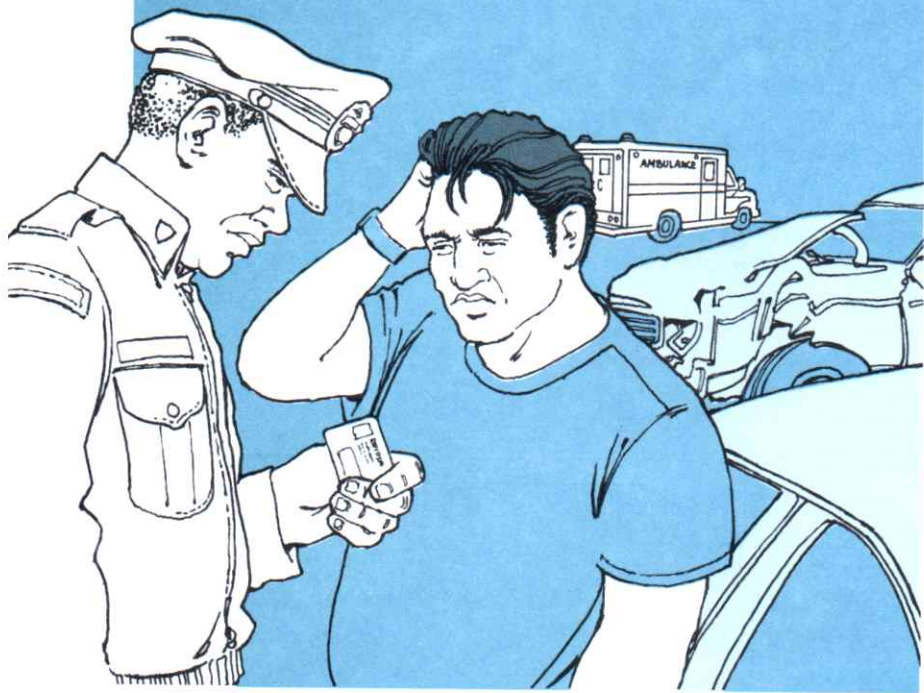


Alcohol, Other Drugs & Driving

—A Deadly Combination!



Why should I know how alcohol and other drugs affect driving skills?

Because your safety and the safety of others is at stake. Here's why:

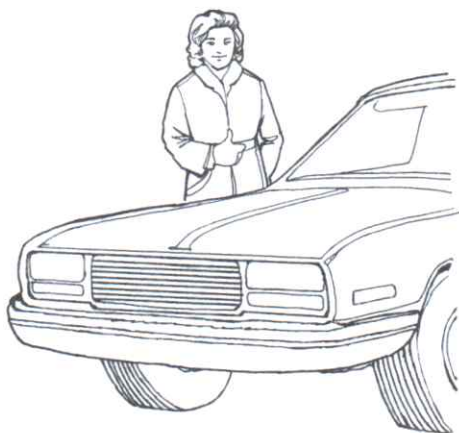
Alcohol* is a powerful depressant.

It's found in beer, wine or other alcoholic beverages (such as wine coolers, hard cider and hard lemonade) and hard liquor. People who drive after drinking endanger themselves and others.



Other drugs may also seriously impair driving skills.

Responsible drivers heed all warnings about possible side effects of both prescription and over-the-counter drugs. They never use illegal drugs.



Driving safely saves lives.

You can help make roads safer by avoiding alcohol and certain other drugs whenever you plan to drive.

*Alcohol is a drug, though many people don't realize it. And remember—it's illegal in all states for people under 21 to:

- buy alcohol
- drive after drinking alcohol.

Alcohol use or possession by people under 21 can result in other legal problems. Know the laws in your state.

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What does it take to be a safe driver?

Safe drivers wear safety belts and understand the importance of:

Alertness

You must be wide-awake and attentive to traffic and road conditions at all times.

Good vision

Having good side, night and distance vision allows you to spot potential problems right away.

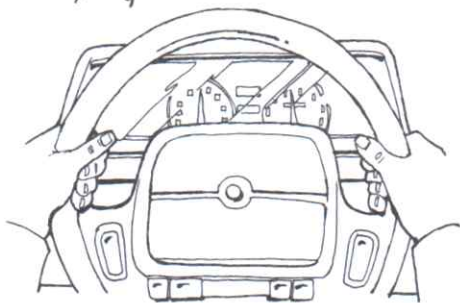
Sound judgment

Being able to make rapid, intelligent decisions is essential to avoiding dangerous situations and handling them safely when they do occur.

Quick reactions

Once you spot a problem and decide what to do, you must act quickly and precisely. This requires good reflexes and coordination.

Safety-conscious drivers know—driving safely is no accident!



Please read:

Talk to a professional! This booklet is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified expert. This booklet is not a substitute for knowing and following all local, state and federal alcohol- and other drug-related laws. You should consult your state department of motor vehicles and/or a lawyer about any questions.

Alcohol is a major killer on our roads.

About 30% of all traffic deaths are alcohol related. Learning about alcohol's effects on the mind and body could prevent you from making a fatal error—drinking and driving!

Some effects of alcohol

Alcohol reaches the brain almost immediately after it's consumed. Possible results include:

Poor judgment

Alcohol acts like an anesthetic, dulling areas of the brain that enable people to make sensible decisions.

Slowed reaction time

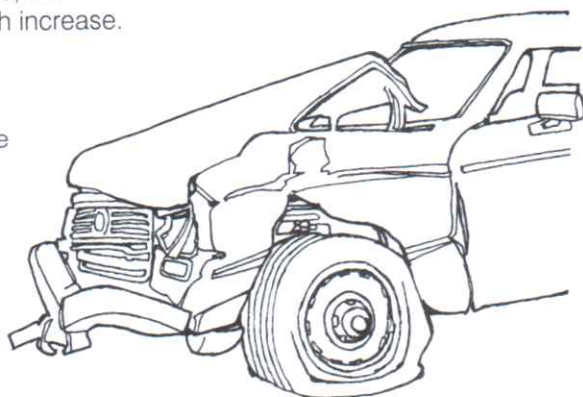
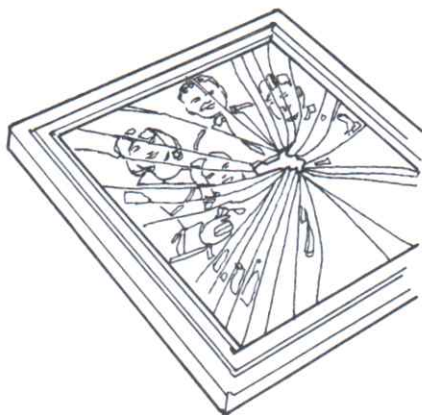
Drinking slows reflexes and hinders coordination. Drivers who can't react quickly are a hazard to themselves and others.

Loss of concentration

Drinking may cause drowsiness. When alertness decreases, the chances of having a crash increase.

Visual problems

Alcohol can cause double or multiple vision and blurring. It also reduces side vision, making it difficult to see vehicles approaching from the left or right.



Special risks of alcohol

Alcohol can be especially dangerous when people:

Fail to recognize

alcohol's handicapping effects. Some drinkers mistakenly think that alcohol improves their driving ability.

Wrongly believe

that coffee, a cold shower, exercise or fresh air can sober them up. Time is the only way to sober up.

Lack experience

as drivers. The result may be unpredictable driving behavior, possibly leading to tragedy.

Don't realize

that beer and wine (as well as hard cider and hard lemonade) can be just as potent as hard liquor. 12 oz. of beer, 5 oz. of wine and 1½ oz. of 80-proof liquor all contain about the same amount of alcohol. Actual alcohol content varies from drink to drink. Always check the label.

Nationwide, thousands of lives could be saved each year if people didn't drink and drive.



How many drinks does it take to affect my driving ability?

It depends on many factors. But even one drink can be one too many!

What is BAC?

It stands for blood alcohol concentration. BAC is the amount of alcohol in a person's blood expressed as a percentage.

What factors can affect BAC?

There are many, including:

- Body weight—the same amount of alcohol will generally have a greater effect on a lighter person than on a heavier person.
- Gender—men generally process alcohol faster than women.
- Food—the more food you have in your stomach, the slower alcohol is likely to be absorbed.
- How fast one drinks—the faster one drinks, the faster one becomes impaired or intoxicated.
- Mood—your emotional state can also affect BAC.



BAC limits are the same in almost all states.

In most places, depending on a driver's age and type of license, he or she can be considered impaired or intoxicated with a BAC level of:

- **anything above .00**—illegal for drivers under 21 (zero tolerance)
- **.04 and above**—illegal for commercial drivers
- **.08 and above**—illegal for all drivers. (In special cases, adult drivers can be considered under the influence at lower BAC levels.)

Penalties differ by state. It's up to you to know and obey all alcohol-related laws.

Remember, there is no safe amount of alcohol for drivers!

How does marijuana affect my driving skills?

In many of the same ways that alcohol does. For example, marijuana may impair:

Coordination

Marijuana interferes with muscle coordination. This could affect the driver's ability to maneuver the vehicle quickly and accurately when necessary.

Reasoning

Marijuana users may think they're in complete control and perfectly capable of driving—but they're not!

Vision

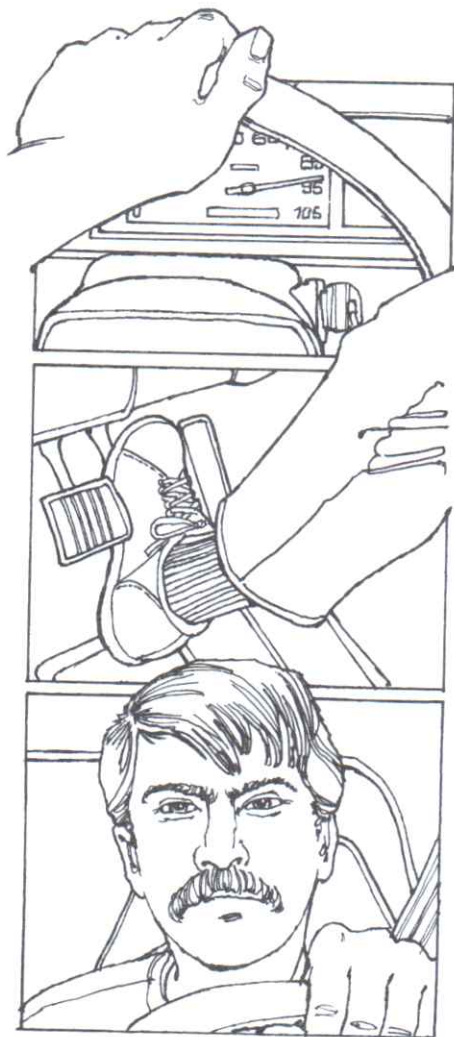
Drivers who use marijuana have trouble adjusting to the glare of oncoming headlights and may experience double vision.

Tracking ability

This essential skill, which involves the ability to follow a moving object with your eyes, is significantly impaired by marijuana use.

Danger isn't always obvious!

The physical effects of marijuana may last for several hours after the mental effects wear off.



Other drugs affect driving ability, too!

It's important to know the possible side effects of any prescription or over-the-counter medications you may use.

Antihistamines

These are contained in many over-the-counter cold remedies, cough medicines, allergy and hay fever medications, and decongestants. Antihistamines may cause drowsiness, which can affect driving ability.

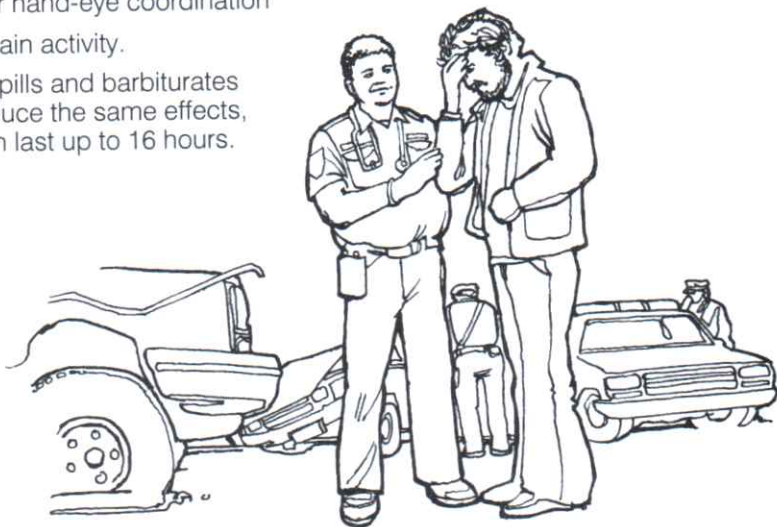


Tranquilizers

Most tranquilizers are prescribed to relieve tension and anxiety. They may also:

- cloud judgment
- slow reflexes
- hamper hand-eye coordination
- slow brain activity.

Sleeping pills and barbiturates may produce the same effects, which can last up to 16 hours.



Stimulants

Generally, these drugs make people more alert, but only for a short time. Later, they may cause:

- nervousness
- dizziness
- loss of concentration
- visual problems.

Amphetamines—stimulants that help relieve depression and control appetite—may cause drivers to overestimate their abilities. This may lead to taking chances on the road.

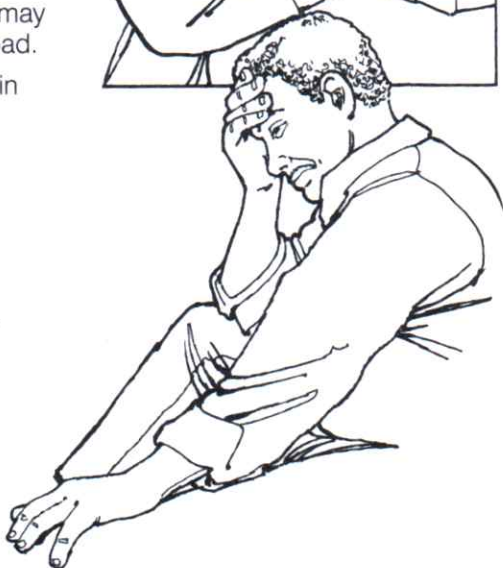
Cocaine use may cause lapses in concentration and attention.



Pain relievers

Many prescription painkillers may cause drowsiness. These include any containing codeine, hydrocodone or oxycodone.

Obviously, anyone whose alertness is affected by a pain reliever doesn't belong in the driver's seat.



Any drug you take might impair your driving skills. Combining drugs or mixing alcohol with other drugs is especially dangerous!

Alcohol and other drugs can be a deadly combination.

Combining alcohol and other drugs (or combining different drugs) may result in serious side effects, possibly even death. For example, never mix:

Alcohol and tranquilizers

These substances are both depressants. They slow down thinking, breathing and heartbeat.

Taken in combination, alcohol intensifies the effects of tranquilizers, possibly causing coma or death.

Alcohol and marijuana

Studies show that the combined use of alcohol and marijuana is more hazardous than using either substance alone.

Alcohol and antihistamines

When antihistamines are taken with alcohol, the effects of the alcohol may sharply increase.



Drivers who value human life never mix alcohol, other drugs and driving.

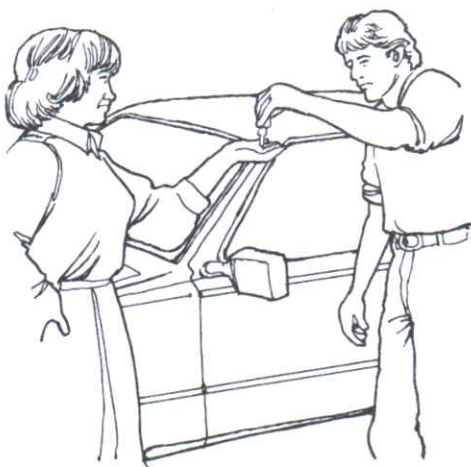
You can help protect others.

If someone you're with uses alcohol or other drugs and then plans to drive, you should:

Arrange another way to get the person home.

Since alcohol and other drugs impair judgment, the person may insist that he or she is capable of driving. Don't be fooled by this mistaken confidence. Instead, you should:

- Drive the person home.
- Ask someone else who's sober to drive the person home.
- Call a taxi, or contact a ride-sharing service.
- Insist that he or she take public transportation, if it's available.
- Take away the person's keys, if necessary.



Consider other options.

For example, if alternate transportation is unavailable, offer the person a place to sleep.



Don't mix alcohol, other drugs and driving.

Don't drink.

If you do drink, follow these guidelines:

- Don't drink alcoholic beverages if you plan to drive.
- Drink in moderation (2 drinks per day for men, 1 drink per day for women and 1 drink per day for anyone age 65 or older).
- Sip—don't gulp—your drinks.
- Eat starchy foods, such as cheese and crackers, while you drink. (Food slows alcohol's effects, but it doesn't prevent them.)



If you plan to drink, don't drive. If you plan to drive, don't drink. And never ride with a driver who's been drinking!

Learn about possible side effects.

If you're taking a prescription medication, ask your physician or pharmacist about:

- how the drug might affect driving ability
- the dangers of combining your medication with alcohol or other drugs.

If you're using an over-the-counter drug, you should:

- Read and follow the warnings on the label.
- Consult a pharmacist if you have any questions.



Never use illegal drugs.

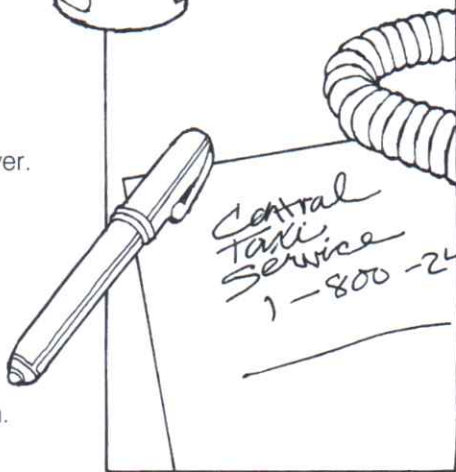
Find alternatives to driving.

If you plan to drink, you can:

- Leave your car at home and have a nondrinking friend do the driving.
- Give your keys to a nondrinking driver.
- Arrange to stay overnight.

If you haven't planned ahead and you've been drinking, don't drive. Instead:

- Ask someone to take you home.
- Take a taxi, use a ride-sharing service or take public transportation.



Take a stand against alcohol- and other-drug-impaired drivers.

We all want drunk drivers off the roads.

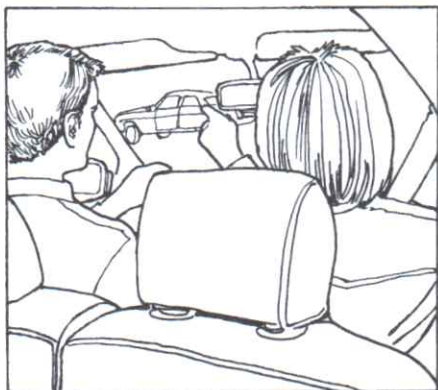
As a result, states have developed stiffer penalties for drinking and driving and better enforcement of the law. You can help by watching out for impaired drivers.

Be alert for drivers who may be impaired.

Look for drivers who:

- take wide turns
- straddle the center line
- pass extremely close to objects or other vehicles
- drive unreasonably fast or slow
- hug the shoulder, curb or edge of the road
- weave, creating a zigzag course
- fail to use headlights at night
- drive with windows open in cold weather
- stop or start in a jerky manner
- follow another driver too closely.

If you observe any of these warning signs, stay clear and report the vehicle to the police or sheriff.



Driving while intoxicated is a serious crime—whether the driver causes a crash or not!

You can help make our roads safer!

Understand

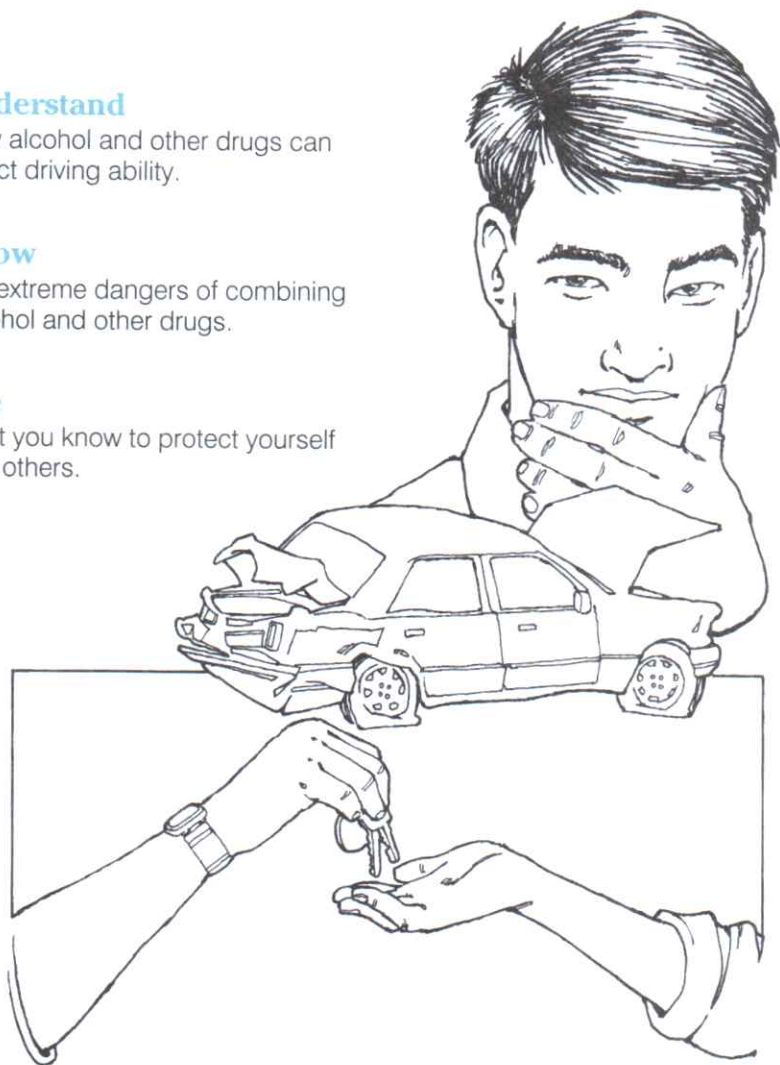
how alcohol and other drugs can affect driving ability.

Know

the extreme dangers of combining alcohol and other drugs.

Use

what you know to protect yourself and others.



Don't drink (or use other drugs) and drive—it's not worth the risk!

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