

It's your
turn to shout

AT THE HEART
OF THE MATTER,
NZ DRUG
FOUNDATION.

Te Tūāpapa Tarukino o Aotearoa

Have your say on Drink Driving



“ Current BAC limits are ‘ridiculous’. ”

MINISTER OF TRANSPORT HON STEVEN JOYCE 9 SEPTEMBER 2009

HAVE YOUR SAY ON ALCOHOL LAW CHANGES.

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE ON

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your-turn-to-shout](http://drugfoundation.org.nz/your-turn-to-shout)

A new alcohol bill is currently before Parliament. The Alcohol Reform Bill is the Government's response to the review of our liquor laws by Law Commission President Sir Geoffrey Palmer. The Law Commission made 153 recommendations but not all have been accepted. There is still time to persuade the Government to strengthen its response.

FACTSHEETS

- 1 Background to Alcohol Reform Bill
- 2 Alcohol Pricing
- 3 Alcohol Marketing
- 4 Alcohol in your Community
- 5 Drink Driving
- 6 Social Supply
- 7 Purchase Age

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KEY FACTS

80 MG PER 100ML OF BLOOD

THE CURRENT BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION (BAC) LIMIT IS 80MG OF ALCOHOL PER 100ML OF BLOOD.

50 MG PER 100ML OF BLOOD

A BAC LIMIT OF 50MG OR LESS IS STANDARD IN MOST OTHER COUNTRIES.

15 TO 30 LIVES SAVED

LOWERING THE ADULT BAC LIMIT TO 50MG WOULD SAVE BETWEEN 15 AND 30 LIVES AND PREVENT BETWEEN 320 AND 686 INJURIES EVERY YEAR.



What did the Law Commission recommend?

- Blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limits for driving should be reduced from 80 to 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood for adult drivers.
- The limit should be zero for drivers under 20 years of age.
- Alcohol interlock devices should be considered for all convicted drink drivers. These devices require the driver to provide an alcohol-free breath sample before the vehicle can be started.

What was the Government's response?

- **Poor.** The Government opted not to change the adult BAC limit, leaving it at 80mg for adult drivers. Instead, it has requested two years of research on crash-involved drivers with BAC levels between 50 and 80mg. It says New Zealand-specific research is required before any changes are made.
- The Government has adopted a zero BAC limit for drivers under 20 years of age. They have also adopted the recommendation for alcohol interlock devices.

OVERALL GRADE AWARDED



NOT ACHIEVED, DEMONSTRATES A LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE AND THE CORRESPONDING REQUIREMENTS. MORE EFFORT REQUIRED.



Research and experience shows:

- Lowering the adult BAC limit to 50mg would save between 15 and 30 lives and prevent between 320 and 686 injuries **every year**.
- There are nearly 300 international studies examining BAC levels and driving ability. They overwhelmingly show that the more alcohol a driver has consumed, the higher their crash risk.
- Every 20mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood is associated with a near **doubling** of crash risk. At the current rate of 80mg, a driver is twice as likely to crash as a driver at 50mg.

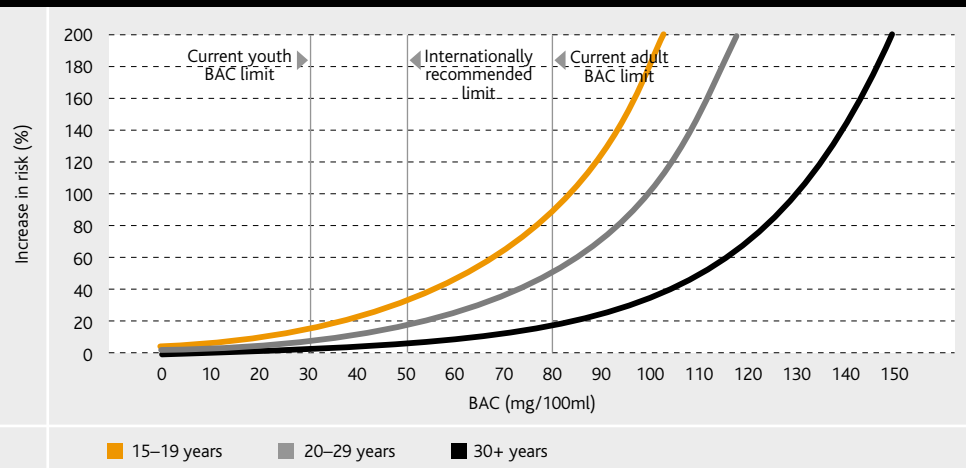


AT THE CURRENT BAC LIMIT, A DRIVER IS TWICE AS LIKELY TO CRASH AS A DRIVER AT 50MG.

85%

OF NEW ZEALANDERS SUPPORT LOWERING THE BAC LIMIT TO 50MG OR LESS.

Risk of crashing by BAC level and age of driver



- Young people are more susceptible to the effects of alcohol and are less experienced drivers. They are at significantly increased risk of crash even at very low BAC concentrations.
- It is easier to keep track of how many drinks you've had when keeping below 50mg. This is about two cans of beer drunk by an average-sized adult male in one hour. People intending to keep below a limit of 80mg are more likely to lose count of their drinks.
- Most New Zealanders support a legal BAC limit of 50mg. When asked how much alcohol should be safe to drink before driving, 85% of those surveyed answered two drinks or less. This is equivalent to a BAC limit of 50mg.
- A BAC limit of 50mg or less is standard in most other developed countries including Australia. Places that have lowered the BAC limit have experienced reductions in drinking and driving and alcohol-related deaths and injuries.
- Alcohol interlocks can be an effective tool for managing recidivist drink drivers, but they are only effective in the long term if the underlying alcohol problem is addressed. Otherwise, they only work for the duration they are installed in the offender's vehicle.



What should the Government do?

- The Government should immediately lower the adult BAC limit to 50mg per 100ml. There is ample research evidence, applicable to New Zealand, to support this change.
- The Drug Foundation fully supports the Government's decision to reduce youth BAC limits to zero. This sends a clear message to young people that, if you drink any alcohol, you should not drive.
- We also support the Government on the introduction of alcohol interlocks for repeat drink drivers. However, repeat drink driving offences are often a sign of an underlying drinking problem. Ensuring that treatment is available to recidivist drink drivers should be a priority.

What should you do?

- Have your say in creating better alcohol laws by making a written submission to the Select Committee before Tuesday 1 February 2011. This can be as short or long as you like, and you can use this toolkit to help you.
- Tell the Government that it should accept all 153 of the Law Commission's recommendations.
- If you make a written submission, you should also make an oral presentation. You can be as creative as you like. This is your chance to tell your story about the impact of alcohol on your family and community and to tell our politicians about the changes that you want to see.
- Encourage your friends, family and community to get involved. The more New Zealanders who speak out, the more likely it is that the Government will listen.
- Ask to meet with or write to your local MP and let them know your views on alcohol law change.
- Visit www.drugfoundation.org.nz/your-turn-to-shout for more information and the full toolkit.

ABOUT US



The New Zealand Drug Foundation has long been interested in how laws governing the sale and supply of alcohol could be strengthened to reduce alcohol-related harm and create a healthier drinking culture in New Zealand. We provide leadership and representation for our nationwide membership of organisations and individuals working on alcohol and drug issues. This factsheet is one of a number we have developed as part of a toolkit to support communities to be heard on the Alcohol Reform Bill. **Check out our website for more information and the full toolkit.**

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