
DRINK DRIVING & ALCOHOL LIMITS

Version 3

1. Policy statement

In 2015, there were nearly 6,000 accidents involving drink driving in Great Britain. This resulted in approximately 1,170 people who were seriously injured and 220 fatalities because a driver was over the legal alcohol limit.¹

Whilst accidents involving drink driving have fallen by three-quarters since 1979, PFEW believes there are still too many people killed or injured as a result of drink driving and that the Government should reduce alcohol limits for drivers in England and Wales. This would bring England and Wales in line with Scotland and most other European countries and would save lives and make roads in England and Wales safer.

Drink driving is one symptom of heavier alcohol consumption. A report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in May 2015² found that levels of alcohol consumption in the UK are above the OECD average and have increased during the last 30 years. Heavy alcohol consumption impacts on NHS England and NHS Wales as well as it being a major factor in violent crime, domestic violence and assaults on police officers. PFEW believes that the Government should introduce minimum unit pricing for alcohol.

2. Responsibility

The INB is responsible for all policy formation.

3. Summary

In England and Wales, the current alcohol limit for drivers is 80 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood, 35 micrograms per 100 millilitres of breath or 107 milligrammes per 100 millilitres of urine. In most other European countries, the limit is less. The risk of being involved in an accident increases rapidly when alcohol is consumed as alcohol impairs driving. The amount of alcohol a driver would need to drink to be considered over the limit varies from person to person depending on weight, gender, metabolism, the type and amount of alcohol being drunk, stress levels, whether food has been eaten and age. In order to deter drivers from drinking and driving PFEW calls on the Government to reduce the alcohol limits in England and Wales to 50 milligrammes of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of blood, 22 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath and 67 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of urine.

¹ Dept for Transport statistics Table RAS51001: Estimated number of reported drink drive accidents and casualties in Great Britain

² Tackling Harmful Alcohol Use: Economics and Public Health Policy, OECD, May 2015

PFEW believes that Chief Officers should put roads policing back on the policing agenda and made a priority at national and local level. This combined with a lower alcohol limit will enable officers, the Crown Prosecution Service and the courts to take more drivers off the road who pose a risk to public safety.

PFEW believes that the Government should legislate to introduce minimum unit pricing for alcohol to help limit the consumption of alcohol. Currently, it is far cheaper to buy alcohol in supermarkets and off-licences than in licensed premises. The heavy consumption of alcohol has implications for both the national health service and the police service in England and Wales. It is a major factor in violent crime, domestic violence and assaults on officers.

4. Procedures/implementation

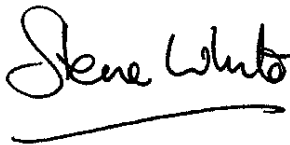
Through the Legislation Sub-Committee PFEW will press the Government to reduce alcohol limits for drivers in England and Wales and to introduce minimum unit pricing for alcohol.

Through the Roads Policing Sub-Committee we will campaign to have roads policing put back on the policing agenda and made a priority both nationally and locally.

Responsibility is delegated to the General Secretary and/or the appropriate sub-committee

	Author	Date	Date to be reviewed	Change
Version 1	EP-KP	June 2015	June 2016	
Version 2	EP-KP	June 2016	June 2017	Updated figures re number of accidents in GB from drink driving
Version 3	KP_EP	June 2017	June 2018	No change

Signed by:



Chairman



General Secretary