

## **Annual Christmas Drink and Drug Drive campaign**

Kent Police is reminding motorists about driving safely during the festive period.

With more than 200 motorists arrested for drink or drug driving during last year's Christmas Drink and Drug Drive Campaign, it's important that people are reminded of their responsibilities.

As part of the national campaign officers from Kent Police's Roads Policing Unit will be out in force across the county following an intelligence led approach to target those who recklessly drink and drug drive.

They will be proactively patrolling and targeting high risk locations to identify and prosecute motorists who are impaired by alcohol or drugs.

Officers will be carrying out breath tests, roadside drug swipes and field impairment tests at all times during the day and night to ensure those who break the law are arrested, charged and put before the courts.

But it is important to highlight that drink driving occurs all year round, not just at Christmas.

However, due to the increase in people socialising it is a time that officers have an increased focus on tackling this offence.

## **Plan ahead**

Throughout the year we would urge people to plan ahead before a night out. If you are going to have some alcohol then keep some money aside for a taxi home, or nominate a driver in your group of friends who will not drink at all. It is just not worth the risk of getting behind the wheel of a vehicle when you have alcohol in your system.

Our message is that there is no safe amount of alcohol to have in your system when driving, so if you plan to have an alcoholic drink you should make alternative arrangements to get home.

Sergeant Mark Carron from the Roads Policing Unit said: "We want everyone to go out and enjoy themselves but also act responsibly.

"Our advice is simple, plan ahead. If you are driving, don't drink.

"Every year innocent motorists and pedestrians are put at risk from people who think it is acceptable to drive whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs; this campaign is about telling people it is not acceptable. We are passionate about changing bad driving behaviour on our roads to protect all those that use them. We want all the people of Kent and visitors to the county to have a safe and happy Christmas which is why we don't make allowances for anyone driving whilst under the influence and why we have these campaigns."

You can view our supporting YouTube video

here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADSWgK\\_yP44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADSWgK_yP44)

To help you all prevent crime in your areas and from being a victim of crime this is the next daily guide/tips to help you be safe this Christmas and New year. Today's guide is regarding Drinking Responsibly to tie in with the above press release and campaign from Kent Police.

## **Drinking Responsibly**

### **What is responsible drinking?**

Being a responsible drinker basically means:

- making sure you're safe
- making sure other people are safe
- avoiding dangerous situations
- minimising the risks to yourself and others
- having a good time.

**Know your limits** - Don't drink too much, and don't drink too quickly. In practice, this basically looks like having one drink per hour, with water or a soft drink in-between alcoholic drinks. When you feel drunk, stop drinking.

**Avoid mixing alcohol and other drugs** - That means both prescription drugs and recreational drugs. Make sure you know how alcohol will react with any medications you're on. If you decide to take drugs, don't drink alcohol. You'll usually end up pretty sick if you combine the two.

**Use common sense** - If it doesn't sound like a good idea, it probably isn't one. If you're not comfortable with the environment you're in or are worried about bad things happening, just call it a night.

### **Don't drink and drive**

If you have to drive, don't drink. Make arrangements for how you'll get home before you go out. Alcohol is a depressant drug that slows down your reaction speed, which means if you need to think and act quickly, you probably won't be able to.

Don't risk it. If you're drinking, plan to use a taxi, bus, train or a designated driver to get you around.

#### **Drink driving offences and penalties**

If a person is found guilty of drink driving they can be fined, banned from driving or even imprisoned. These punishments depend on the seriousness of the offence which include:

- Being in charge of a vehicle while above the legal limit or unfit through drink. This could result in 3 months' imprisonment, up to £2500 fine or a possible driving ban.
- Driving or attempting to drive while above the legal limit or unfit through drink. A person could get 6 months' imprisonment, an unlimited fine or a driving ban for at least 1 year (3 years if convicted twice in 10 years).
- Refusing to provide a specimen of breath, blood or urine for analysis. Refusal could lead to 6 months' imprisonment, an unlimited fine or a ban from driving for at least 1 year.
- Causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink. This serious offence could result in 14 years' imprisonment, an unlimited fine, a ban from driving for at least 2 years or an extended driving test before your licence is returned.

Being convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol a number of effects on everyday life, beyond a drink driving fine or ban.

You could lose your job, particularly if you drive for work as your employer will see this on your licence. You may also find it difficult to seek employment in the future.

If and when you are legally allowed to drive again, it won't be cheap. Car insurance costs increase significantly after a drink driving conviction. A drink drive conviction could cost between £20,000 - £50,000 as a result of fines, solicitors fees, increase in car insurance and loss of job.

As with any criminal record, you may even find it hard to enter other countries such as the USA and this can affect life plans to holiday, work or study abroad.

### **How much alcohol can I consume before I am over the limit?**

The only safe limit of alcohol to have in your blood and drive is **zero!**

It is not advisable to even have one drink and drive as alcohol impairs your judgement and lessens your reflexes.

The official amount of alcohol is 35 micrograms per 100 ml of breath reading, this cannot be translated into an exact amount of units as it depends on many factors, height and weight, time when last drink consumed etc., so the best advice is not to drink at all or order a taxi.

Remember also, that the effects of alcohol or drugs can take a long time to wear off and it is possible that a person could still be "Over the limit" the morning after drinking or taking drugs.

### **When you're out for the evening**

- Watch your drinks and food to ensure that nothing is added to them. Never leave your drink unattended, even if you are going to dance or to the toilet. If your drink has been left unattended, don't drink any more of it. If something tastes or looks odd, don't eat/drink any more of it. Be aware, though, that some drugs are colourless and tasteless.
- If someone you don't know or trust offers to buy you a drink, either decline or accompany them to the bar and watch that nothing is added.
- If you meet someone new at a party, avoid going home with them or inviting them back to your home/accepting a lift from them. It's safer to arrange a second date in a public place to get to know the person better. If you do find yourself alone with someone you don't know well, make sure that someone knows where you are and who you're with.
- Pay attention to your instincts. If you feel uneasy about someone, there may be a reason.

- Make sure someone knows where you are going and when you'll be home.
- Avoid walking home alone and never with someone you don't know well.
- Drink responsibly, arrange for a member of your group to be a designated driver.
- Check your taxi drivers ID and never get into an unlicensed taxi.
- The ideal plan is to book your cab or taxi in advance or call a licensed cab company from the party and arrange for them to pick you up right outside the venue.
- Never accept a lift from a minicab touting for trade on the street. They are illegal and can be very dangerous.
- Always sit in the back of a cab/taxi and if you get chatting to the driver, do not give away personal details. If you feel uneasy with the driver, ask him to stop at a busy familiar place and get out.
- If using public transport, have your ticket, pass or change ready in your hand so that your wallet or purse is out of sight.
- Always wait for the bus or train in a well-lit place near other people if possible and try and arrange for someone to meet you at the bus stop or station. If a bus is empty, or it is after dark, you may feel safer on the lower deck as near as possible to the driver. On trains, avoid empty compartments. If you feel threatened on any public transport press the alarm or attract the attention of your fellow passengers or the driver or guard.
- Take note of where the emergency alarms are and try to sit near them.

**Hope this guide will help you all have a safe and pleasant Christmas and New Year.**

**Who to contact to report suspicious activity or a crime?**

- If there is a threat to life or public safety, or a crime may be in progress dial 999
- To report a crime other than a crime in progress call 101.
- To report a crime other than a crime in progress you can also go to [www.kent.police.uk/report](http://www.kent.police.uk/report) to report your crime on line.