

How Alcohol Can Affect Safe Driving Skills

JUDGMENT: The ability to make sound and responsible decisions.

- Alcohol affects your mental functions first, and judgment is the first to go, which means reason and caution are quickly reduced.
- Can be affected as low as .02% BAC.

CONCENTRATION: The ability to shift attention from one point of action to another.

- Alcohol impairs a driver's ability to concentrate on the multiple tasks involved in driving, such as vehicle speed, position of the vehicle, other traffic on the road, tuning the radio, and participating in conversation with passengers.
- Leaves the driver concentrating on a singular action.

COMPREHENSION: The ability to understand situations, signs, and signals.

- Alcohol impairs the driver's ability to "interpret" situations, signs, and/or signals which a driver must understand and/or respond to quickly to be safe on the road.
- Leaves the driver easily confused and not able to respond to emergency situations or to comprehend the meaning of simple signals (ie: running through a stop sign).

COORDINATION: The ability to coordinate motor skills.

- Impairs ability to coordinate motor skills, beginning with the fine motor skills (putting key in ignition) up to gross motor skills (walking to the car).
- Loss of coordination severely affects reaction time and ability to react.

VISION & HEARING ACUITY: The ability to see and hear clearly.

- Reduces visual acuity up to 32%.
- Reduces peripheral vision resulting in tunnel vision.
- Impairs ability to judge distance and depth perception (position of car).
- Dilates pupil, slows down reactions of pupil resulting in problems with on-coming headlights (glare) and "blind" driving.
- Reduces the ear's ability to hear, muffling sounds, and interfering with the ability to determine the direction of sounds.

REACTION TIME: Ability to see and understand a situation, then take an action.

- Severely reduced due to impairment of comprehension and coordination in particular.
- Slows down reaction time by 15-25%, resulting in crashes and accidents which could have been avoided if no alcohol was in the system.