

Alcohol, drugs and driving

Melita is 18 years old and holds a Provisional licence. She started drinking at 10pm and had 6 mixer (9 standard) drinks over 4 hours. At 2am her blood alcohol concentration (BAC) was 0.24. She stayed the night at a friend's house. Melita will not be able to drive until her BAC is back to zero. This will take over 16 hours.



Make sure your teenager understands the risks of driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol as well as getting into a car with someone who is under the influence.

The blood alcohol limit for Learner drivers and Provisional drivers (P1 and P2) is zero. A zero blood alcohol limit means if Provisional drivers are going to drive they need to decide not to drink any alcohol.

Many people are booked for drink driving the day after. It is important that young people think about how much alcohol they drank on the previous evening and how long it has been since their last drink. If a person goes out drinking and has a 'big night' they may still be over the zero limit the next day.

If your teenager is planning to drive, remind them that some medicines or mouthwashes contain alcohol (ethanol). Some foodstuffs may also contain alcohol, for example fruitcake, trifle and liqueur chocolates. Consuming large amounts may affect their BAC.

Just like alcohol, drugs can affect judgement, concentration and reaction time.

NSW Police can now carry out roadside drug testing for illegal drugs. If a preliminary oral fluid test is positive, drivers will have to get out of their vehicle and go with a police officer to provide a second oral fluid sample in the police support vehicle.

If the way a person was driving indicates that they are impaired by drugs, including alcohol, or they are involved in a fatal crash, police have the power to take them to a hospital for a blood and urine sample. The sample will be analysed for any drugs including some prescription medicines known to impair driving.

For more information about alcohol, drugs and driving and penalties that apply refer to the Roads and Traffic Authority website (www.rta.nsw.gov.au).

This publication is intended as a guide only. The contents do not constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. Persons wishing formal advice on matters referred to in this publication should consult their solicitor.