

At a Glance – Strengthening Alberta’s Approach to Impaired Driving

Alberta’s approach

- This law is not intended to stop people from enjoying a drink with dinner or after work with friends.
- The new law affects repeat offenders the most.
- Alberta does not believe that fines are the solution. These changes do not include fines or new demerit point offenses.
- Instead, our focus is on safer roads. This made-in-Alberta approach focuses on changing behaviours through mandatory courses and ignition interlock.
- Alberta is focusing on Criminal Code offences, repeat offenders and new drivers.
- Education and enforcement will both be key to Alberta's approach.

Quick Facts and stats

- 22% of drivers involved in fatal collisions in Alberta in 2010 had consumed alcohol before the crash. (Alberta Traffic Collision Information System)
- In 2010, 96 people died and 1,384 were injured in alcohol-related collisions in Alberta. (Alberta Traffic Collision Information System)
- Impaired driving charges take up an estimated 40% of all trial time of Crown Prosecutors in Alberta’s courts. (Alberta Justice)

Other jurisdictions

- Alberta is the 10th jurisdiction to pass laws imposing tougher sanctions for drivers with blood alcohol between .05 and .08 (Saskatchewan starts at .04)
- Every Canadian jurisdiction, other than Quebec, already gives at least 24-hour roadside suspensions to drivers suspected of being impaired or having .05 to .08 blood alcohol.

Key changes

For drivers with a blood alcohol concentration over .08, or who refuse to provide a breath sample:

History: Alberta’s mandatory ignition interlock has proven effective for repeat offenders, drivers with blood alcohol more than double the legal limit (over .16) and those refusing breathalyzers. Prior to the recent changes Alberta had licence suspensions but no vehicle seizures for drivers above .08.

- Immediate licence suspension until the criminal charge is resolved.
- *1st offence* – sustained licence suspension and 3-day vehicle seizure.
- *2nd offence* – sustained licence suspension, 7- day vehicle seizure.
- *3rd offence* – sustained licence suspension, 7-day vehicle seizure.
- Mandatory ignition interlock after criminal conviction (over .08) – 1 year for 1st offence; 3 years for 2nd offence; 5 years for 3rd offence.

For drivers with blood alcohol concentration of .05 to .08:

History: While Alberta currently can suspend drivers suspected of being under the influence, the new rules specify increasing sanctions. **These drivers are not and will not be subject to Criminal Code prosecutions.**

- *1st offence* - 3-day licence suspension and 3-day vehicle seizure.
- *2nd offence* - 15-day licence suspension, 7-day vehicle seizure, “Planning Ahead” course.
- *3rd offence* - 30-day licence suspension, 7-day vehicle seizure, “Impact” course.

For drivers with a graduated driver’s licence:

History: Alberta will continue to allow Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) to begin at the age of 14. All GDL drivers are already subject to zero tolerance for blood alcohol and receive a 30-day suspension.

- GDL driver found with blood alcohol – 30-day licence suspension and 7-day vehicle seizure.

