



# Impairment & Fatigue

## Know your limits

Alcohol impairment is one of the greatest contributing factors in motor vehicle fatalities and serious injuries worldwide. In 2009, 26% of all fatal collisions in Nova Scotia involved alcohol.

Drugs, including alcohol, reduce your ability to divide your attention among tasks, making it unsafe to operate a motor vehicle. And remember, alcohol is alcohol. One 12-ounce glass of beer has as much alcohol as a 1.5-ounce shot of whiskey or a 5-ounce glass of wine.

Nova Scotia has more than 50 trained Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) to determine if there is impairment due to drugs and alcohol. These experts can also identify the category of drugs in your body. Remember: You can be charged for impaired driving if your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle is impaired by drugs other than alcohol.

## THE COST OF CONVICTION

The financial cost for a person charged and convicted of impaired driving after trial is about \$32,000, including legal fees, fines, license reinstatement, the alcohol interlock program, and insurance.

## Fatigued driving

Research shows that people are not good at recognizing or acting on the signs of fatigue. Recognizing your fatigue can be difficult, but learning the warning signs is an important way to minimize your risk on the road.

### What are the warning signs of fatigue?

- Frequent yawning
- Drowsiness
- Sore or tired eyes
- Boredom
- Feeling irritable and restless
- Slow reactions
- Loss of concentration
- Failing to check your driving mirrors (e.g., side and rearview)
- Drifting from your lane
- Inconsistent speed
- Erratic braking
- Missing an exit or turns
- Hallucinations
- Nodding off

The following strategies will **not** reduce fatigued driving:

- Drinking coffee
- Taking caffeine pills
- Opening windows or turning on air conditioner or fan
- Talking to passengers
- Stopping to eat, exercise, or relax, without napping
- Turning up the radio or music

### What can I do to reduce fatigued driving?

- Don't schedule driving trips before your usual wake-up time or after your usual bed time
- Get a good night's sleep before driving
- Plan ahead
- Take regular breaks when driving for long periods
- If possible, drive during daylight hours
- If you are on any medication with drowsiness as a side-effect, try to postpone your trip or use an alternate transportation, e.g., have a friend drive you, take a taxi, bus or train

Source: New Brunswick Ministry of Public Safety