

What is the scientific evidence to support lowering the drink drive limit?

There is no disputing the scientific evidence which proves that even at low levels, alcohol impairs drivers. Collisions are usually multi-factorial and removing/ reducing this risk factor has a proven beneficial effect in reducing the number and severity of collisions. We have a range of actions to address other risk factors also. Examples of international scientific research to support this include the following:

	Research Findings	Sources
1	Impairment in critical driving functions begins at very low BAC levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ferrara SD, Zancaner S, Georgetti R (1994) Low blood alcohol levels and driving Impairment. A review of experimental and international legislation. <i>International Journal of legal Medicine</i>. Moskowitz H, Fiorentino D, (2000 April) <i>A review of the literature on the effects of low doses of alcohol on driving-related skills</i>. Department of Transportation, National Highways Traffic safety Administration, Washington D.C (DOT HS 809 028) Moskowitz H, Burns M, Fiorentino D, Smiley A, Zador P. (2000) <i>Driver characteristics and impairment at various BAC</i>. Southern California Research Institute, National Highways Traffic safety Administration, Washington D.C (DOT HS 809 075)
2	<p>The relative risk of being involved in a fatal crash as a driver is up to 10 times greater for drivers with BACs between 0.05 and 0.07g/dL, compared with drivers with 0.00g/dL.</p> <p>Drivers have a considerable higher risk of being involved in a collision (18%) at 0.04G/dL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zador PL, Krawchuk SA, Voas RB (2000) Alcohol-related relative risk in fatal crashes in relation to driver age and gender: An update of the 1996 study. <i>J. Stud Alcohol</i> Crompton RP, Bloomberg RD, Moskowitz H, Burns M, Peck RC, Fiorentino D,. (2002) In DR Mayhew, C Dussault (eds) :<i>Proceedings of the Alcohol Drugs and Traffic Safety – T 2002: 16th International conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety August 4-9 2002</i>. International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety (ICADTS), Montreal Canada.

International experience has demonstrated the positive reductions in fatalities that accrue from implementing reduced BAC. The policy delivers a change in driver culture and has a general deterrence effect. In other countries they saw reductions in collision involvement not just at lower levels but also a reduction in collisions involving drivers at higher BAC levels. The scientific analysis and outcomes achieved internationally clearly make the case for this public policy measure. Examples of outcomes achieved in other countries which reduced BAC include the following:

<p>After the introduction of 0.05g/dL or lower;</p> <p>Netherlands- sustained decline in number of drinking drivers involved in collisions (15% to 12%) (1974)</p> <p>France - reduction of 36% in</p>	
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<p>alcohol-related collisions (1996)</p> <p>Austria – 9% decline in alcohol related crashes (1988)</p> <p>New South Wales – 13% decline in alcohol- related collisions at weekends (1994)</p> <p>Queensland – 18% reduction in fatal collisions and 14% in serious injury collisions (1982)</p> <p>South Australia – reduced night time drinking drivers by 14% (1991)</p> <p>Japan – reduced both alcohol-related collisions and drinking drivers (1970) alcohol related fatal collision drooped from 15% to 11% when BAC of 0.03g/dL was introduced in 2007.</p> <p>Denmark – increase in number of drivers who no longer consumed alcohol while driving from 71% to 80% (1998)</p> <p>Sweden – reduction of 9.7% in fatal crashes, 11% in single vehicle collisions and & in overall collisions (1997)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fell JC, Voas RB (2009) Reducing illegal blood alcohol limits for driving; effect on traffic safety. In <i>Verster SR, Randi-Perumal SR, Raemakers JG, de Gier JJ (eds) Drugs, Driving and Traffic Safety</i>. Birkhauser Verlag/Switzerland
<p>Switzerland – reduction in alcohol-related fatalities by 44% (2005)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Siegrist S, (2009) 0.5 BAC and Random Breath Testing: the Swiss Experience. European Transport Safety Council Lecture(ETSC) Dublin Castle 12th October