

## How Much Is Too Much? Knowing When You're at the Legal Limit

Most people know that the legal limit for blood alcohol content (BAC) while operating a vehicle is .08%, but few know what this means in practical terms. This post is meant to explain how alcohol can affect the body and what .08 means in real world terms.

*Photo Courtesy of yourdictionary.com*



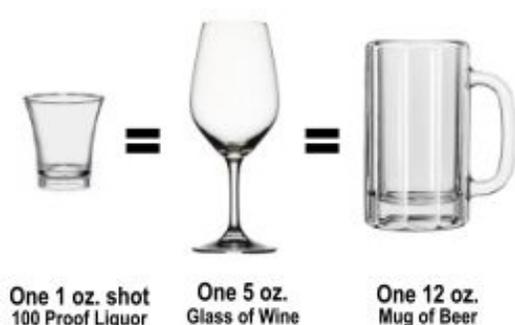
It is difficult to determine when a person has reached a BAC of .08, even with a breathalyzer. Not only does alcohol affect each person differently, but the accuracy of a breath test can also vary.

The amount of alcohol expelled through your breath can vary from moment to moment and from person to person. It is entirely possible for a person with a .08 BAC to show a higher .1 on an officer's breathalyzer. Figuring out what .08 means for you depends on many personal factors, and any advice can only inform your decisions rather than making them for you.

The number of drinks is not a reliable measure of BAC as the same amount of alcohol can have drastically different effects on different people. Two drinks will be perfectly safe for some while putting others over the limit. Your sex, body weight, and body fat are all crucial factors.

Obviously a heavier person will be able to drink more than someone smaller. Also the more water in a person's body will lower their BAC. Men statistically have a larger amount of water in their bodies than women do, which will dilute the alcohol in the bloodstream allowing men to drink more while remaining sober. While two drinks will give the average 100 pound woman a .1 BAC, a 240 pound man can drink twice as much and only reach .06.

A rule of thumb is that the body can metabolize one drink per hour (a drink being a glass of wine, a twelve ounce beer, or a shot of 80 proof liquor), but for women, people younger than 25, people with liver problems, or certain ethnicities it can be slower. Ethnicities that did not historically drink alcohol cannot metabolize drinks as quickly. If you are in one of these groups, it is important to allow yourself plenty of time before getting behind the wheel.



*Photo Courtesy of tabc.cc*

Interestingly enough, aspirin will hamper your body's ability to metabolize alcohol, while fructose can speed up detoxification by up to 80%.

Alcohol has different affects on your body as your BAC gets higher. Usually around .03-.06 (about one drink) you start to feel relaxed and talkative. Driving is still an option, though not recommended. Between .06 and .09 you will begin to lose your inhibitions and become more extroverted. At this point it is not longer safe to drive. Most people feel they can still get behind the wheel, but if given a breathalyzer test, they will fail. Contrary to popular belief, you do not need to be falling over to get a DUI.

Anything higher than .09 will have obvious signs of intoxication. A BAC of .1 to .19 will cause mood swings, slurred speech, and boisterous behavior. From .2 to .29, you will experience severe motor impairment and a possible loss of consciousness. Anything higher than this will begin to affect your heart rate and breathing function which can possibly lead to death.

Living New Orleans where drinking is part of the culture, a BAC of over .08 is commonplace, but it is very important not to get behind the wheel. If you or anyone you know has been charged with a DUI, contact [Bloom Legal](http://Bloom Legal) at 504-599-9997 for a free case evaluation.

