

DRIVING LIMITS and PENALTIES:

The UK legal limit is 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood. As a rough guide this means men should consume no more than 4 units of alcohol, and women no more than 3 units, before driving. Still, there is no fail-safe guide as to how much you can drink and stay under the limit. The only safe way to avoid a fatal accident, driving ban and/or large fine is not to drink if you plan to drive.

The diagram below shows how a unit usually corresponds to normal pub measures in the UK. But note that just one pint of strong beer or cider or lager can contain 4 or 5 units. And home measures are often more generous than pub measures.



It is also important to note that, if you are stopped by the UK's police and fail a breath test, then a driving ban is automatic. When the ban is finished you will find that your insurance is much more expensive and hiring any vehicle is almost impossible.

In the case of serious offences, such as drink-driving, the courts will take away your licence. The minimum period is 12 months, but for repeat offenders or where the alcohol level is high, it may be longer. For example, a second drink-drive offence in the space of 10 years will result in a minimum of 3 years' disqualification. Anyone who kills by drink-driving faces up to 10 years in prison. For other serious drink-driving offences the fine may be up to £5000.