

# Autosobriety Training Programme to prevent drink-driving

South Africa



*“Training and education are key drivers to advance road safety. Through the Autosobriety Programme, we aim to reach an important number of drivers in the eThekwin Municipality, and this serves as a tool for other municipalities who wish to implement it as well.”*

**Dr. Mpilo Ngubane, Director, CIFAL Durban**



**This educational programme aims to contribute to advance the United Nations Global Road Safety Performance Target:**



By 2030, halve the number of road traffic injuries and fatalities related to drivers using alcohol, and/or achieve a reduction in those related to other psychoactive substances.

Objective and disclaimer: The information contained in this booklet synthesizes existing data in relation to the issue of drink and driving for educational purposes. This information does not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research

# 1 About

The Autosobriety Training Programme consists of educational tools that aim to contribute to reducing and preventing alcohol-related traffic fatalities and injuries, and ultimately advance UN Global Road Safety Performance Target 9: By 2030 halve the number of road traffic injuries and fatalities related to drivers using alcohol.

## Learning Objectives

- Recognise the impact of drinking and driving on people's lives.
- Identify drinking and driving as a key risk factor causing road traffic crashes amongst communities and stakeholders.
- Know more about legal frameworks around drinking and driving.
- Identify the different ways to prevent drinking and driving.

# 1 Programme Implementation

South Africa



eThekweni Municipality

Poland



Plock

Mexico



Merida, State of Yucatan  
Guadalajara, Jalisco

Ecuador



Quito

Dominican Republic



Santo Domingo

Thailand



Bangkok

Cambodia



Phnom Penh

Vietnam



Hanoi

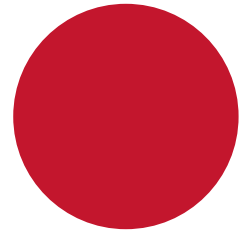
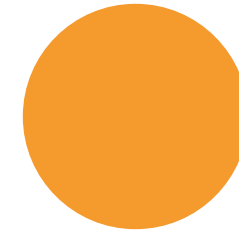
China



Shanghai

# Module

# 1

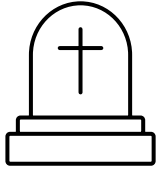


## Road traffic injuries

**At the end of the module, the participant will be able to:**

1. Recognize the impact of drinking and driving in South Africa and in the Gauteng province through statistics.
2. Compare the province road safety current situation with the rest of the country and/or globally.
3. Describe recent trends on drinking and driving related crashes and casualties in South Africa and in the Gauteng province.

# 1 Global Statistics on Road Safety



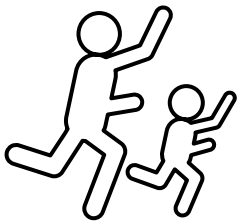
Every year **1.19 million** people are killed worldwide



Between **20 and 50 million** more suffer injuries, with many incurring disability

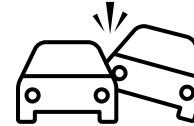


Approximately every **24 seconds** road crashes kill one person-nearly 3,200 killed per day

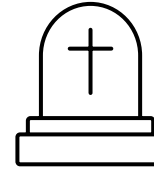


Road crashes are the number one killer of **5 to 29 years-old**

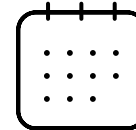
# 1 Crashes and casualties in South Africa in 2024



**10,339** fatal crashes

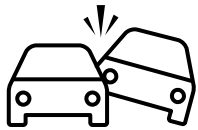


**12,172** casualties in South African roads



**28** deaths daily

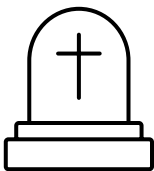
# 1 Crashes and casualties in Gauteng Province in 2024



**62,387** crashes



**14,912** injuries of which **3,582** are serious injuries



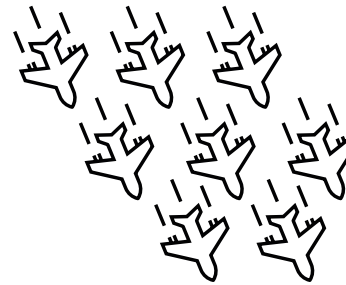
**787** deaths

Source: South African Road Traffic Management Corporation.

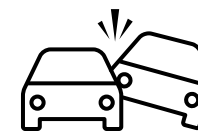
# 1 Driving intoxicated in South Africa



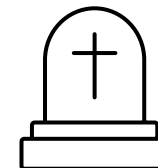
It is estimated that alcohol use is involved in **27% of fatal crashes (2,875 deaths)** in South Africa.



**2,875 deaths/year** can be compared to 8 crashed airplanes (each plane with 368 passengers)



In 2024-2025, there were **1,502 alcohol related** crashes in eThekweni, which comprises at least **1.2% of all crashes** in the municipal area.

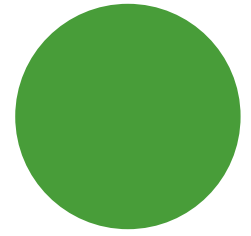
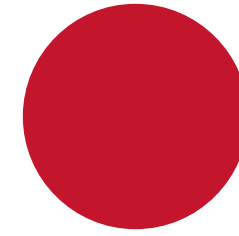


**4% of Road Traffic casualties** in eThekweni involve **alcohol**



# Module

# 2

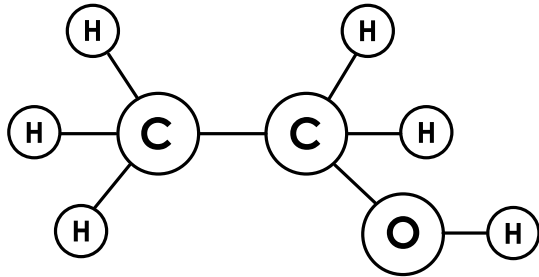


## Drinking and Driving

**At the end of the module, the participant will be able to:**

1. Identify drinking and driving as one of the key risk factors causing road traffic crashes.
2. Explain what alcohol is and its effect on the human body and how it is measured.
3. Differentiate the units of alcohol content in different drinks.
4. Identify how alcohol impacts driving performance.

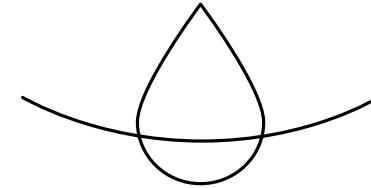
## 2 What is alcohol?



- The main component of alcohol is ethanol.
- The strength of an alcoholic drink is defined by the amount of alcohol (ethanol) it contains as a percentage of its total volume.
- This measure is called alcohol by volume, or ABV.
- In some countries, this percentage is also called “degrees” of alcohol.
- This definition is the same for all beverages - beer, wine and spirits.

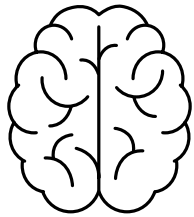
## 2 How alcohol is absorbed into the body?

### Absorption



- The first stage during which alcohol enters the bloodstream is called absorption.
- Alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream through the stomach.
- Once alcohol is ingested, it begins to be broken down in your mouth before entering your digestive system, and it is absorbed into your blood stream. The majority of alcohol is absorbed through your stomach and small bowel.

## Alcohol on brain



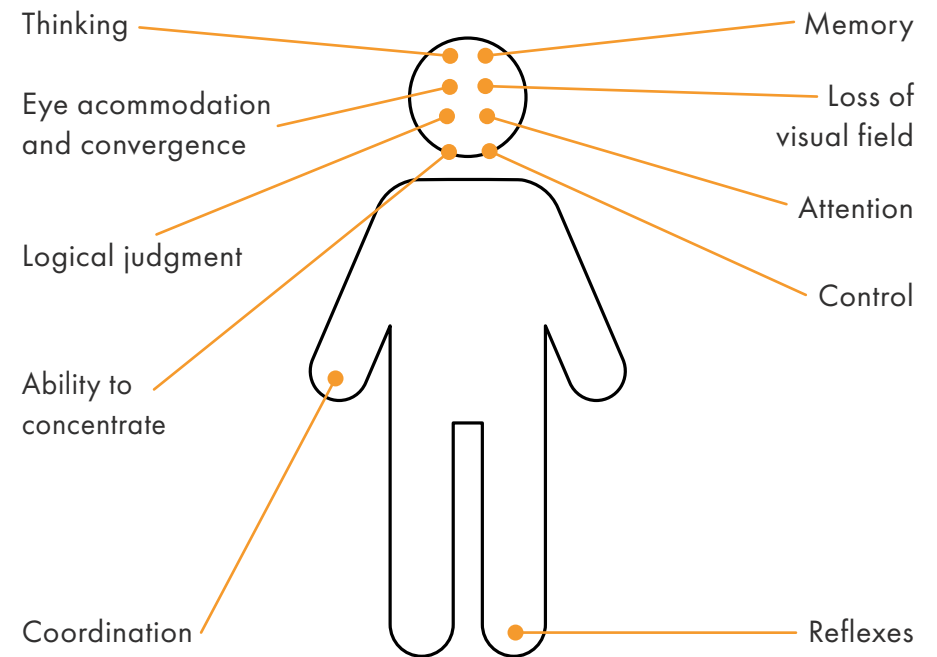
Through the blood, alcohol spreads over to all organs, and primarily to the **brain** and **muscles**.

When alcohol enters the brain along with blood, we begin to experience alcohol intoxication.

This process can continue when the driver is on the road.

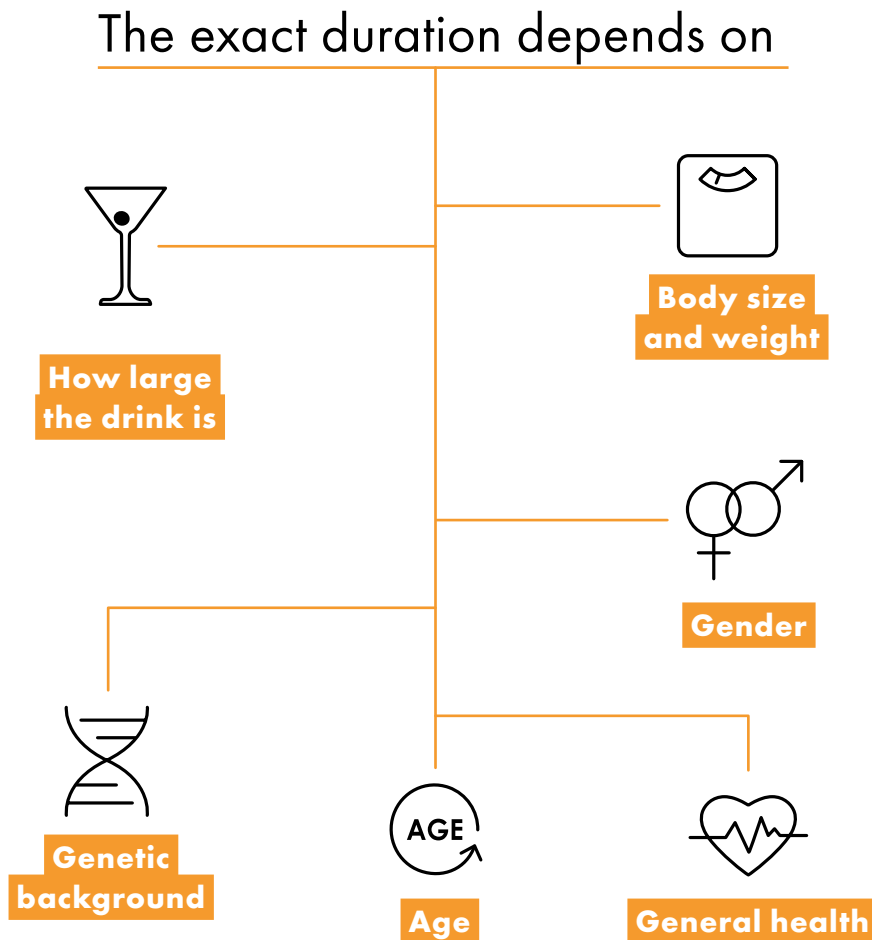
## 2 Effect on the human body

Alcohol is a **depressant for the central nervous system (CNS)**, impairing functions related to judgment, control, and cognition. When the central nervous system (CNS) is suppressed, the following functions slowdown affecting behavior:

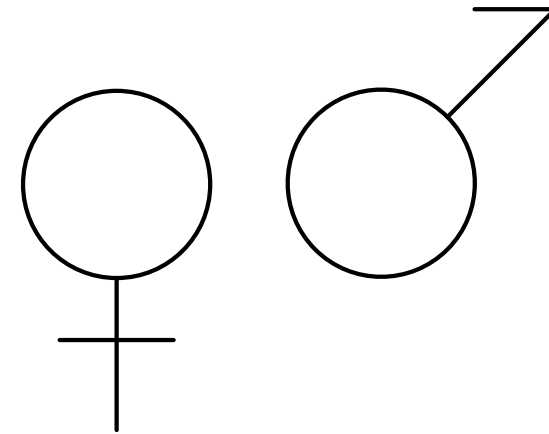


## 2 How long does it take for the body to assimilate alcohol?

It takes an average adult approximately 1 hour to process one unit of alcohol.



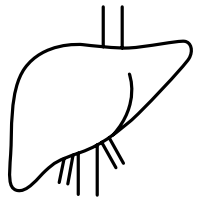
When they drink the same amount of alcohol, **women will end up with a higher concentration of alcohol in their blood than men**, because:



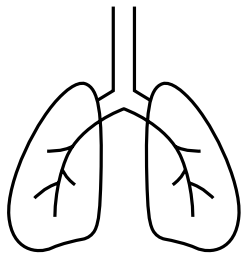
- Women typically weigh less than men.
- Women have less water in their body to dilute alcohol.
- Women bodies contain fewer of the enzymes that break down ethanol.

## 2 How does alcohol leave the body?

Here is where the alcohol undergoes a metabolic process:



**90% of the consumed alcohol** is processed by the liver.



**The remaining 10% of alcohol** is removed from the body directly through sweat, tears, urine and through the lungs.

On an average, the liver is capable of processing about 8 grams of pure alcohol per hour.

In South Africa, one unit of alcohol is about 8 gr of pure alcohol.



**2,1 units**

Standard glass of wine



**2 units**

Draft glass of low strength beer



**3 units**

Draft glass of high strength beer



**1,7 units**

Bottle of lager



**1,5 units**

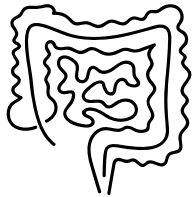
Cider



**1,7 units**

Single spirit with mix

## 2 Is it possible to hide the presence of alcohol in blood or to accelerate its elimination of the body?



### Eating

If the stomach is full, the alcohol mixes with the food, which slows down its absorption.

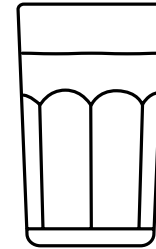
So, eating may reduce the pace at which your BAC increases. In addition, we also tend to drink more slowly while eating.

However, eating will not prevent you from getting drunk or accelerate the elimination of alcohol.



### Drinking strong coffee or an energy drink

This will not reduce alcohol in your blood. It may help you to stay awake but it won't change the level of alcohol in blood and make one sober.



### Drinking water

This will not speed up alcohol processing, but the body needs water to break down alcohol and remove it in urine.

Staying hydrated will help your body process the alcohol you consume.

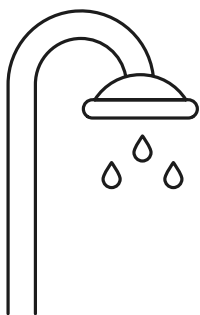


### Induce vomiting

Doing this after having an alcoholic drink may reduce a part of it in the body but alcohol will still be in the blood, not in the stomach.

The more time has passed since getting the drink, the more alcohol has transferred from digestive system to the bloodstream.

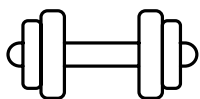
## 2 Is it possible to hide the presence of alcohol in blood or to accelerate its elimination of the body?



### Taking a cold shower

This may create a false feeling of increased alertness, as if alcohol had stopped affecting the body, but in fact it did not.

Also, drastically changing the body temperature, can be dangerous.



### Doing sports

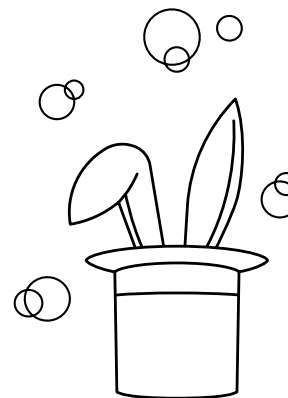
This may help removing a small amount of alcohol from the blood through perspiration.

However, this amount is not significant to reduce drunkenness.



### Sleeping

It takes an average adult one hour to process one unit of alcohol. During sleep, the process of metabolism in the body slows down. Naturally, the time to process alcohol increases.



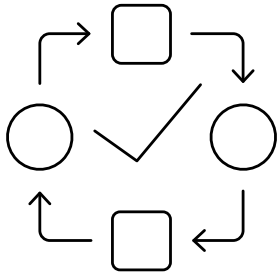
### Attention!

Even when the alcohol is fully eliminated from the body, the brain and muscles have not completely "returned" to normal state.

There is no effective way to get back to being sober faster.

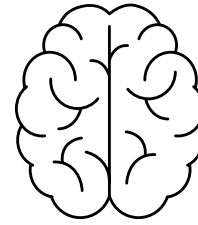
On average, the liver is able to process about 8 grams of pure alcohol in just one hour. Time is needed to eliminate alcohol from the body.

## 2 Effects of alcohol on driving performance



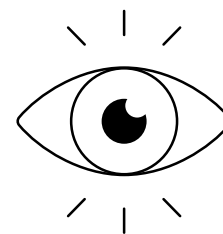
### On your driving behaviour

- Speeding or, on the contrary, very slow driving
- Unjustified and unexpected actions (braking, turning, changing the lane or speed, etc.)
- Looping and twisting on the road
- Mixing up the gas and brake pedals, red and green traffic lights
- Reckless and irrational actions



### On your brain and body

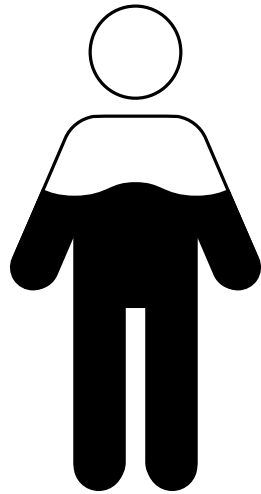
- Lower speed of reaction and reflexes
- Loss of muscle control and coordination
- Impairment of logical thinking and decision-making
- Loss of attention, ability to concentrate and memory
- Twisted space orientation and perception of road conditions
- Spontaneous and uncontrolled emotionality



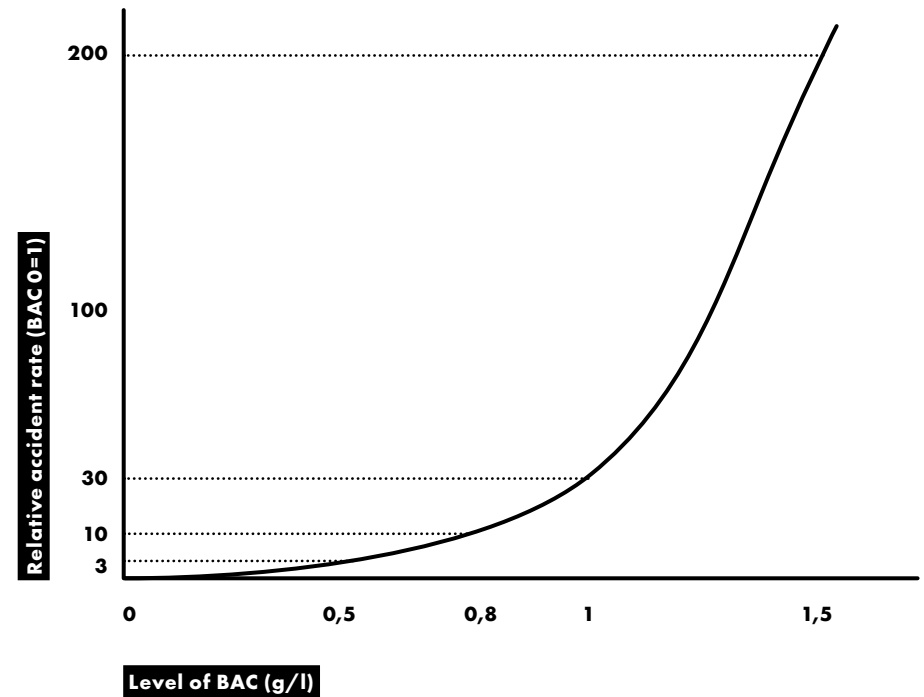
### On eyesight

- Light sensitivity
- Foggy outline of objects
- Distortion of colours
- Erroneous perception of distance
- Tunnel vision

## 2 How is alcohol measured in the body?



- The amount of alcohol in blood can be measured through the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC).
- BAC refers to the percentage of alcohol (ethyl alcohol or ethanol) in a person's bloodstream.

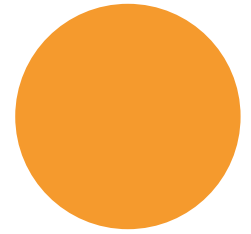
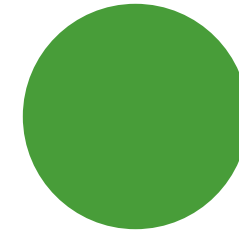


- Less than half of countries worldwide (88 countries) have drink-driving laws based on a BAC limits that is equal to or less than 0.5 g/l (0.5 grams per liter of blood).
- Studies show that the relationship between relative crash rate and BAC-level is exponential.

\*(Compton y Berning 2015)

# Module

# 3



## Alcohol and the law in South Africa

**At the end of the module, the participant will be able to:**

1. Distinguish blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limits for drivers.
2. Recognize legal consequences of drinking and driving in South Africa.

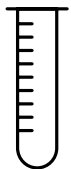
### 3 Legislation to control alcohol levels in South Africa



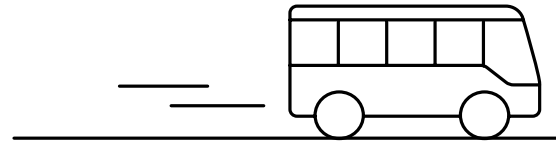
The National Road Traffic **Act 93/1996** in effect since March 1998 in South Africa establishes rules regarding...



**“Driving while under the influence** of intoxicating liquor or drug having a narcotic effect, or with an excessive amount of alcohol in blood or breath.”



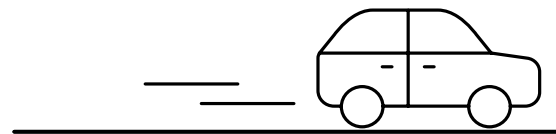
No person on a public road shall drive a vehicle, occupy a driver’s seat of a motor vehicle, the engine of which is running, while the concentration of alcohol is **not less than 0.05 grams per 100 millilitres of blood (0.05 g/ml)** (Section 65)



BAC limit for professional and commercial drivers.

**0.02 grams of alcohol**

per 100ml



BAC limit for individual drivers.

**0.05 grams of alcohol**

per 100ml

### 3 Legal consequences of drinking and driving

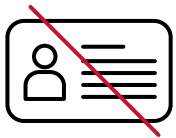
## Drinking and driving is a criminal offense in South Africa



If a person is found guilty of drunk driving, he/she could face **up to 6 years in prison**



A person could pay a **fine up to R120,000**

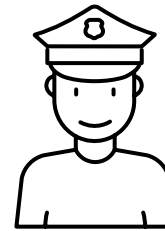


The driver's **license may be suspended**



A drunk person will have a **criminal record** that can have serious consequences for the rest of the life

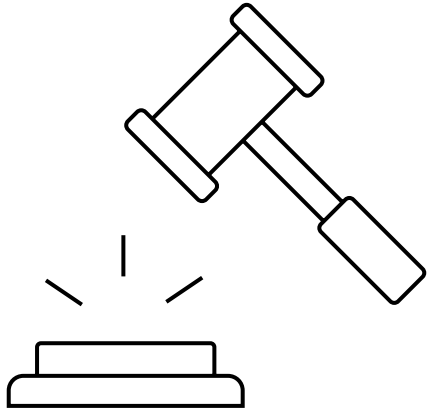
### 3 What if you are found driving under the influence of alcohol?



Members of the South African Police Service, the various Metropolitan Police Departments and other law-enforcement agencies are more frequently conducting roadblocks and manning other checkpoints to prevent drunk people from driving.

Based on the Criminal Procedure Act (Section 40(1)), a law enforcement officer may use a breath testing device to determine if an individual is driving exceeding the legal BAC limit, and formally arrest and charge the accused with the offence of contravening section 65(5) of the National Road Traffic, which prohibits driving while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs.

### 3 What if you are found driving under the influence of alcohol?



#### Arrest

- According to Section 50 of the Criminal Procedure Act,
- Once arrested, the driver shall be taken to the police station and sent for further testing at an alcohol testing center to ascertain the estimated quantity of alcohol in the person's blood at the time of the examination.
- The test must be done within two hours of the alleged act.
- The person will then be held in custody until further release on bail or first appearance in court.

#### Bail

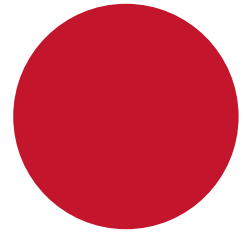
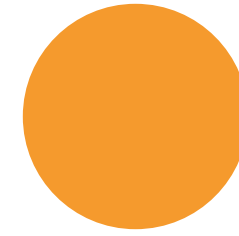
- An accused in custody might be released after the payment of, or the furnishing of a guarantee to pay, a sum of money determined for the bail. (Section 58 of the Criminal Procedure Act)
- The Magistrate or Judge (depending on the seriousness of the offence) uses their own discretion, when considering the circumstances of every case and orders the amount of bail to be paid.
- The amount is dependent on numerous factors, including the nature of the crime, the interests of justice and other reasonable conditions, such as the existence of a previous charge, affordability, and income of road conditions.

#### Sentencing

- After all, above listed procedures, the accused must appear in Court where the State, through a prosecutor, must prove a case beyond a reasonable doubt during a trial.
- A long and lengthy process which involves presenting evidence by both the State and the accused's defense team happens and could take many months to finalize.
- Depending on the circumstances, sentences can include:
  - Imprisonment: up to 6 years
  - A fine: minimum of R2,000
  - Suspension of the driver's license

# Module

# 4



## Preventing drink-driving

**At the end of the module, the participant will be able to:**

1. Identify the different ways to prevent drinking and driving.
2. Recognize and summarize road user's responsibilities to avoid drinking and driving.

## 4 Ways to prevent drinking and driving



### Legislation and enforcement

- Enforce laws on maximum levels of alcohol in blood.
- Increase fines and punishments.
- Implement specific actions for serious offenders.



### Controls

- Controls by the police.



### Education

- Information and education of the population
- Forced education for offenders.



### Technology

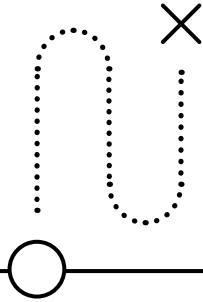
- Enhance procedures for alcohol testing.

## 4 Road User's Responsibility

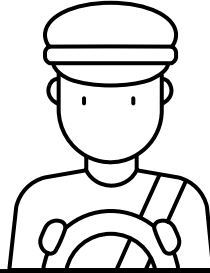


Know how much is enough - know the alcohol content of your drink and how much is enough.

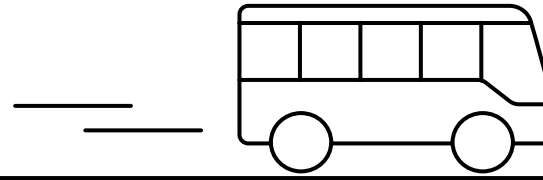
Always drink in moderation.



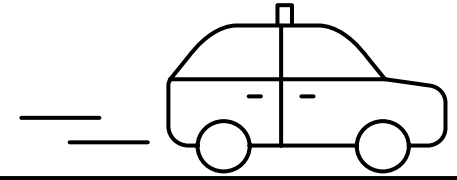
Plan ahead your journey back home before you go out.



Designate drivers and friends.



Pre-booked free drive home options are also available in certain areas from local Banking Service.



Where available, get a taxi or use public transport.

There are different ways to prevent alcohol-related road traffic crashes.

**LET'S USE THEM!**



## Contacts

### UNITAR

roadsafety@unitar.org

### CIFAL DURBAN

**Mpilo Ngubane,**  
*Director of CIFAL Durban*

roadsafety@unitar.org



## Get your Autosobriety certificate!

Scan the QR code to test your knowledge and receive UNITAR Autosobriety certificate.