

Driving and drugs



According to the latest British Crime Survey (2009/10),
20% of 16-24 year olds have used an illicit drug
in the previous twelve months.

That's one in five respondents from a sample
of almost 26,000 respondents.

Drug taking is no longer a 'niche' issue and is fairly widespread across all social groups, gender and age with the 17-25 age group being the most prevalent.

The latest Mix Mag survey of young people (including students) - released in March 2011 - found the following drugs had been taken by drivers in the last year:

Taken when driving

- ▶ Ecstasy = 75%
- ▶ Cannabis = 64%
- ▶ Cocaine = 63%
- ▶ Mephedrone = 51%
- ▶ Amphetamine (speed) = 24%
- ▶ Poppers = 20%
- ▶ Benzodiazepines = 19%
- ▶ Magic mushrooms = 16%
- ▶ Amphetamine (Base) = 15%
- ▶ LSD = 11%
- ▶ Methylone = 9%
- ▶ 2CB = 8%

All of these can seriously impair driving ability.

It is essential that we take the opportunity, as concerned parents, to explain to our sons and daughters that it is a **criminal offence to drive while impaired** and the law makes no distinction between impairment by alcohol and impairment from drugs (illicit or otherwise).

Source: drugdrive.direct.gov.uk

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If they are caught with drugs in their system they will face EXACTLY THE SAME potential penalties as those for drink driving:

They are likely to receive the following:*

- ▶ **A minimum 12-month driving ban.**
- ▶ **A criminal record.**
- ▶ **A fine of up to £5000.**

Furthermore:

- ▶ **There will be a specific record on the driving licence for eleven years that details a conviction for drug driving.**
- ▶ **If the driver is convicted of causing death by dangerous driving, they will receive a prison sentence of up to fourteen years.**
- ▶ **If they drive for work their employer will see the conviction when they have to produce their licence.**
- ▶ **Car insurance will increase significantly.**
- ▶ **Any drug-related conviction may mean encountering difficulties getting permission to enter countries such as the USA.**

Our research has found that many young drivers who take the risk assume they will be okay because the police 'can't prove it' like they can for drink driving offences.

While it is frustrating that unlike many other enlightened countries, the UK is yet to finalise a Home Office approved drug testing kit for the roadside; Police can perform 'field impairment tests'(FIT) instead which are highly accurate.

If, after conducting a FIT test, the Police suspect someone is under the influence of drugs, they have the power to arrest them by the roadside and take them back to the police station for a urine or blood sample which will give conclusive evidence.

The good news is the current Government is taking the menace of drug driving seriously and it is likely that there will be legislative changes in the very near future to further increase police powers.

*Source: drugdrive.direct.gov.uk

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The Good Egg Guide for Parents of
New Drivers

If mixed with alcohol the affects of any drug can increase dramatically

*Slows down/speeds up refers to reaction times

Drug Name	Relaxant/Stimulant	Slows down/speeds up*	Effects on driving
Cannabis	Relaxant (mild sedative)	Slows Down	Slower reaction, blurred vision, lack of concentration and poor hand and eye co-ordination, Cannabis a negative effect on Psycho-Motor performance (Steering ability).
Cocaine	Stimulant	Speeds Up	Falsely heightens your perception of light and sound. Creates a feeling of invincibility and euphoria. Over confidence, increased risk taking and distorted perception. Feelings of paranoia and creates erratic behaviour.
Ecstasy	Stimulant	Speeds Up	Distorts vision and heightens sense of sound. Feeling of euphoria and an increase of energy but as the effects wear off you can feel fatigue and severe tiredness. Feeling of 'invincibility', over confident, aggressive and more likely to take risks.
Amphetamines	Stimulant	Speeds Up	Makes you feel more awake and alert. You may feel more confident but the effects will create a loss of coordination and make you less likely to react to potential dangers. Physical effects include headaches and dizziness as well as irregular heartbeat and breathing. You will often become more irritable, restless and anxious as the effects wear off. After your initial alertness, this can change to sleeping problems, exhaustion and fatigue, which will also affect your driving.
Heroin	Strong Pain Killer	Slows Down	Slows reactions, dulls perceptions and affects coordination. You often feel sleepy, sluggish. Although you may feel euphoric it can also cause distorted perception, nausea and breathing problems.
Ketamine	General anaesthetic	Slows Down	Alters perception and causes hallucinations. It can make you feel as though your mind and body have seperated.
GHB & GBL	Relaxant	Slow Down	GHB and GBL produce essentially the same effects. They both produce a feeling of euphoria and can reduce your inhibitions and make you feel sleepy.
Magic Mushrooms	Both	Both	Distorts colour, sound and objects. They can speed up or slow down your sense of time and movement at the same time.
LSD	Stimulant	Both	Severely distorts senses and perceptions creating visual hallucinations. You may feel confused and distrust your own senses, have poor coordination and control and experience tremors and twitching. Anxiety can also be increased and flashbacks can also occur and making you feel detached from reality

SOURCE: Information sourced from www.TalktoFrank.com