



BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION (BAC) LIMITS

Defining BAC

A person's BAC level measures the amount of alcohol in the blood, by recording the milligrams of ethanol per milliliters of blood. Most countries around the world have legal BAC limits, ranging from 0.0 mg/ml to 0.8 mg/ml with different penalties applying for breaking the law. In some countries, lower BAC limits are set for young, inexperienced drivers and/or for operators of commercial vehicles.

BAC levels are affected by how much alcohol has been drunk, the speed of drinking and over what period of time. An individual's weight, gender, health, and food intake also affect the absorption and metabolism of alcohol, making an estimation of how much it is safe to drink before driving risky.

Legal limits are set as a person's risk of being involved in a traffic crash increases with the amount of alcohol consumed as reactions slow down. Involvement in fatal crashes is 11 times more likely for drivers with BAC levels between 0.5 mg/ml and 0.9 mg/ml, compared with drivers who have not consumed alcohol, hence the recommendation to nominate a non drinking 'designated driver' or to plan other ways of getting home safely when drinking.

Special legislation or BAC regulations are set nationally, at company level or internationally for operators of commercial vehicles, airline pilots, buses, truck, and taxi drivers, as well as for captains of ships for example. In some countries, BAC limits apply to operators of bicycles, snowmobiles, personal aircraft and boats.

TABLE 1: STANDARD BAC LIMITS

Country	Standard BAC (in mg/ml)	Country	Standard BAC (in mg/ml)
Albania	0.1	Kyrgyzstan	0.5
Algeria	0.1	Latvia	0.49
Argentina	0.5	Lithuania	0.4
Armenia	0	Luxembourg	0.8
Australia	0.5	Macedonia	0.5
Austria	0.5	Malaysia	0.8
Azerbaijan	0	Malta	0.8
Belarus	0.5	Mauritius	0.5
Belgium	0.5	Mexico	0.8
Bolivia	0.7	Moldova	0.3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.5	Mongolia	0.2
Botswana	0.8	Nepal	0

Brazil	0.6	The Netherlands	0.5
Bulgaria	0.5	New Zealand	0.8
Cambodia	0.5	Nicaragua	0.8
Canada	0.8	Norway	0.2
Colombia	0	Panama	0
Costa Rica	0.49	Paraguay	0.8
China	0.5	Peru	0.5
Croatia (Republic of)	0	Philippines	0.5
Czech Republic	0	Poland	0.2
Denmark	0.5	Portugal	0.5
Ecuador	0.7	Romania	0
El Salvador	0.5	Russia	0.3
Estonia	0.2	Singapore	0.8
Ethiopia	0	Slovak Republic	0
Finland	0.5	Slovenia	0.5
France	0.5	South Africa	0.5
Georgia	0.3	South Korea, Rep of	0.52
Germany	0.5	Spain	0.5
Greece	0.5	Sweden	0.2
Guatemala	0.8	Switzerland	0.5
Honduras	0.7	Thailand	0.5
Hungary	0	Turkey	0.5
Iceland	0.5	Turkmenistan	0.3
India	0.3	Uganda	0.5
Ireland	0.8	United Kingdom	0.8
Israel	0.5	United States	0.8
Italy	0.5	Uruguay	0.8
Japan	0.3	Venezuela	0.5
Kenya	0.8	Zimbabwe	0.8

Country	Blood alcohol content limits
Dominican Republic	None
Costa Rica, Guyana and Panama	0.00 - 0.03%
Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Jamaica, Peru and Venezuela	0.04 - 0.06%
Other countries of Latin America	Over 0.06%

Table 02: Blood alcohol content limits allowed in countries of Latin America