



# Safety Bulletin

## #7. Fit to Drive?

Year-end brings many celebrations which could influence our fitness to drive, and that of other road users.



### Alcohol & Drugs

- Many road users are affected over year-end
- Even **small amounts** significantly **increase the risk** of serious injuries and fatalities
- Be mindful of the morning after - **residual effects** can still be present
- **Never drink and drive**, and watch out for the driver who has!

### Illness & Medication

- Illness, medication or lack of treatment can all influence your fitness to drive
- If in doubt ask your doctor for advice
- Combination with alcohol can make effects much worse



### Other hazards

- **Fatigue:** reduced or changed sleep pattern in party season
- **Mental state:** high or low emotions, winter feelings, cold temperatures, mind not focused on driving task
- **Distraction:** Vacation, weather, family reunions, celebrations & parties etc



## Additional Notes to "Fit to drive"

Year end time brings a lot of parties provided by the company, partners, family and friends

You will (may) drink

You will be tired

You will be distracted

You will need to leave the safety of your home

You will be expected in all the events

And specially... You will be expected to return to your normal life afterwards

## Alcohol & Drugs

- Despite many campaigns, and strict enforcement, drink driving still remains a significant risk on our roads. E.g. in EU 15% of Fatal crash involve alcohol or illegal drugs (2008)
- Just being below the legal limit is not enough. Most countries in EU have legal limits above zero promille of alcohol in blood. Even below this limits a driver is:
  - more likely to crash
  - much more likely to be in a fatal crash.
  - Accidents involving alcohol tend to lead to more serious injury
- The best rule is never drink and drive, the risks are simply too high.
- If you are driving the following morning:
  - Be mindful of your own state – rate of alcohol dissipation from the body is slow – 1 unit per hour is typical.
  - Be mindful of the state of others – they may not be as conscientious as you, particularly over Christmas & the New Year period

## Medical Conditions & Medication

- An illness, medication or lack of treatment may impair the driver significantly.
- Even a heavy cold may have symptoms which impair mood, concentration, reactions, and judgment.
- Many medications, even non prescription, e.g. to treat a slight cold, can cause drowsiness and influence your fitness to drive
- Combinations of medicines and alcohol can significantly affect fitness to drive

## Other Hazards

- Fatigue:
  - Changed sleeping patterns during vacation period (e.g. late nights) as well as lack of sleep can cause fatigue
  - Impairment to driving is amplified when both fatigue and alcohol are present
- Mental state:
  - Year-end can be an emotional time for many people, winter weather can be depressing, our ability to concentrate can be affected by many things. It can be difficult to acknowledge that these things can affect our fitness to drive.
  - Drivers can be more occupied with feeling comfortable (cold temperature, wet weather, winter feelings) than with his surroundings
  - Focus on driving task, stay alert. If in doubt, don't drive.
- Distraction:
  - There are many mental distractions over this period - vacation, weather, family reunions, celebrations etc
  - Don't let these distract you from your driving. Perform a verbal commentary for a few minutes each time you get in the car to 'switch on' to the driving task