

# Crimebeat

A monthly look at ways to  
Combat Crime.

With East Bassetlaw's Neighbourhood  
Policing Inspector, Jenny Madin



## **Driving? – Don't Drink: Drinking? – Don't Drive**

The Festive Season is almost upon us and many of us will be going out to parties or to the pub with friends, but if you are going out this Christmas and are likely to have a drink, please leave the car at home.

Because if you don't, a round of drinks could cost you a great deal more than a headache and a hangover the next morning

In fact, drink driving could cost you a lot more than you think:

- A court conviction.
- A driving ban of **at least** 12 months.
- An endorsement on your licence for 11 years.
- A criminal record.

If you get caught drink driving, this is the **minimum** that will happen to you. You may also be liable for a fine of up to £5,000 and up to six months in prison.

In addition, there are the every day consequences of being caught drinking and driving.

To understand those consequences, you'll have to use your imagination.

For a start, you'll have to rely on friends and family to drive you where you need to go. For even the most basic trips – to the supermarket or taking the kids to school – you'll be dependent on the local bus service or taxis.

You may have to sell your car to pay the fine – or watch it rusting away for 12 months.

Imagine having to find a new job. You won't be able to drive to work or drive for work.

Many employers refuse to hire people with criminal records and you will have to explain your criminal record at every job interview.

And don't think, "It won't happen to me." Every year around 100,000 drivers who thought they could get away with it are caught.

The police are trained to spot all the tricks drink drivers use to avoid being caught. They can ask you to take a breath test if they **suspect** you have been drinking or if you commit a traffic offence while driving.

You may think you are in control of the car, but even the smallest amount of alcohol affects your ability to drive safely. You will have slower reactions and a reduced field of vision.

Alcohol affects your judgement of speed and distance and leads to over confidence and increased risk taking – increasing the danger to all road users, including yourself.

And there are alternatives.

- Book a taxi. And to make sure you get one, don't leave it until the last minute.
- If you must take the car, agree **at the start of the night** who is driving and **not** drinking.
- Use public transport. It's much cheaper than a fine and a driving ban.
- If you are at a friend's house, stay overnight.
- Don't get into a car driven by someone you know has been drinking.

And don't forget the morning after.

Don't rush to get behind the wheel. You might feel fine, but you could still be over the legal alcohol limit or unfit to drive. And remember, a cold shower, a cup of coffee or any of the other myths about sobering up won't make you fit to drive any quicker.

Time is the **only** thing that will get the alcohol out of your system.

There really is no excuse for drinking and driving at any time of the year.